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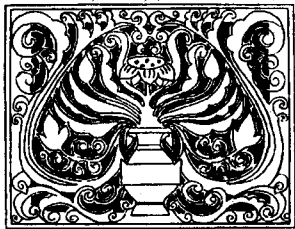


# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

or AWAKENED INDIA

A Monthly Journal of the Ramakrishna Order  
Started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896

AUGUST 2002



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# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

AUGUST 2002

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Cover: Swami Vivekananda's Temple at Ramakrishna Math, Belur, near Kolkata.

उत्तिष्ठत  
जाग्रत  
प्राप्य  
वरान्निबोधत ।

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

Arise! Awake! And stop not till the goal is reached!

Vol. 107

AUGUST 2002

No. 8

## ❧ Traditional Wisdom ❧

### SPIRITUAL TEACHER

अज्ञानतिमिरान्धस्य ज्ञानाञ्जनशलाकया ।  
चक्षुरुन्मीलितं येन तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥

Salutation to the guru who with the collyrium stick of knowledge has opened the eyes of one blinded by the disease of ignorance. (From *Viśvasāratāntra*)

तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।  
उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥

Learn that (spiritual knowledge) by prostration, by inquiry and by service. The wise, who have realized the Truth, will teach you that knowledge. (*Bhagavadgītā*, 4.34)

तद्विज्ञानार्थं स गुरुमेवाभिगच्छेत् समित्पाणिः श्रोत्रियं ब्रह्मनिष्ठम् ॥

To know that Reality let him (the spiritual aspirant), fuel in hand, approach a guru, well-versed in the Vedas and absorbed in Brahman. (*Munḍaka Upaniṣad*, 1.2.12)

तस्मै स विद्वानुपसन्नाय सम्यक् प्रशान्तचित्ताय शमान्विताय ।  
येनाक्षरं पुरुषं वेद सत्यं प्रोवाच तां तत्त्वतो ब्रह्मविद्याम् ॥

To that aspirant who has duly approached him, whose mind is completely serene, and whose senses are controlled, the wise teacher should indeed rightly impart the knowledge of Brahman, through which one knows the immutable and the true Puruṣa. (*Munḍaka Upaniṣad*, 1.2.13)

Rain-water falling upon the roof of a house flows down to the ground through spouts shaped grotesquely like a tiger's head. One gets the impression that the water comes from the tiger's mouth, but in reality it descends from the sky. In the same way the holy teachings that come from the mouths of godly men seem to be uttered by those men themselves, while in reality they proceed from God. (*Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna*, p. 75)

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## ∞ This Month ∞

This month's editorial *Tapas—Its Meaning and Significance* discusses the role of *tapas* in worldly prosperity as well as spiritual life.

**Prabuddha Bharata—100 Years Back** features this month the homage paid to Swami Vivekananda by *The Mahratta*, Poona, of 13 July 1902.

In the concluding part entitled 'His Voice Reverberates' of her three-part research article **Vivekananda—Conqueror of Death**, Ms Linda Prugh captures from various sources reactions to Swamiji's demise by Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi, his brother disciples and his own disciples. Also featured are excerpts from Sister Nivedita's article on Swamiji in *The Hindu* dated 27 July 1902.

**What is Philosophy?** by Sri S K Maitra is a brilliant portrayal of philosophy vis-a-vis science and religion. Making the article free of the dryness most articles on philosophy are known for, the author makes an impassioned plea to cultivate values, for which a study of philosophy can be a great help. The article is based on a lecture delivered at the author at the Banaras Hindu University on 11 February 1937, and published in the July 1937 issue of the now defunct *Philosophical Quarterly*.

**Consciousness is Supreme** is a transcript of a talk by Swami Prabuddhanandaji on the subject. A senior monk of the Ramakrishna

Order and Minister at the Vedanta Society of Northern California, the author discusses in this article the three grades of reality according to Vedanta. The article is a gift from AHIMSA.

**The Bhagavadgita Casts Its Spell on the West** is a two-part article by Swami Tathagatanandaji. In the first part this month, the author traces *Bhagavadgita's* influence in France, Germany and England. The author is a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order and Minister at Vedanta Society, New York.

**Ethics and Development** is a paper presented by Dr D Nesy at an international conference on the subject in Chennai in 1997. Reader and Head, Department of Philosophy, University of Kerala, the author analyses in this article the deeper implications of ethics in the all-round development of the individual and society.

**Avadhūta Upaniṣad** is the final instalment of the translation of this Upanishad by Swami Atmapriyanandaji, Principal, Ramakrishna Mission Vidyamandira, Belur Math. The notes are based on the commentary by Upanishad Brahmayogin.

**Glimpses of Holy Lives** features incidents from the lives of Eknath, the famous saint from Maharashtra and Gadadhara Bhatta, the Vaishnava saint from north India.



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# Tapas—Its Meaning and Significance

## EDITORIAL

Stories abound in the Puranas of sages who practised austerities (*tapas*) standing on their head, standing in neck-deep water, standing with both hands upraised, braving extremes of heat and cold—to mention a few. Keeping vigils and observing fasts on auspicious days like Vaikuntha Ekadashi and Mahashivaratri, is another form of *tapas*. Giving up one's favourite food item after a visit to Varanasi and such holy places is yet another *tapas* practised by some pious Hindus. There are several such ideas about *tapas*. Again, some people think that *tapas* is meant only for monks. A clear understanding of *tapas* and its utility can set things in perspective.

### What is Tapas?

*Tapas* literally means heat. It is common knowledge that metals like gold become pure on heating them. Again, pure metal is extracted from ores by heating them in a blast furnace. Even so, it is said that the practice of *tapas* heats up our system, the mind in particular, and purifies it in the process. We read in Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi's biography that she practised *panchatapa*, an austerity in which she sat in meditation amid four burning fires with the sun above for the fifth fire. Of course, Holy Mother practised the austerity more as an exemplar—she did not need to gain anything from it.

Is *tapas* necessary for all? Does it help us in our day-to-day life? We shall discuss that presently. Sri Shankaracharya makes the idea of *tapas* clear in his commentary on the *Taittiriya Upaniṣad* (3.1.1): '*Sarveṣāṃ hi niyata-sādhyaviṣayāṇāṃ sādhanānāṃ tapa eva sādhatamāṇāṃ sādhanamiti hi prasiddham loke. ... tacca tapo bāhyāntahkaraṇasamādhānam. Tapas is the best discipline, for it is known in the world*

that of all the means that are causally related with definite ends, *tapas* is the best. *Tapas* consists in the control of external and internal organs.' In other words, anything that can be accomplished with some means is accomplished better with *tapas*. This is true of worldly prosperity as well as spiritual progress. The second part of the quoted text makes this clear: '*Tapas* consists in the control of external and internal organs.' We need to briefly understand the Vedantic view of human personality to get a better idea about this control.

### Our Sensory System, *Manas* and *Buddhi*

There are five external organs of action (*karmendriyas*): the mouth, hands, feet, organs of evacuation and generation. Though discipline pertains to these external organs also, more significant is disciplining the five external organs of knowledge (*jñānendriyas*): ears, skin, eyes, tongue and nose. These five organs are five windows in us, as it were, that help us get five different kinds of knowledge about objects in the world: sound, touch, sight, taste and smell, respectively. These ten visible external organs have their invisible subtle counterparts in the human system. These subtle, internal organs make their presence felt in perceptions during dreams. But more important than these internal organs is the mind (*manas*), the chief internal organ. 'Among the organs I am the *manas*,<sup>1</sup> says Sri Krishna in the *Bhagavadgītā*. *Manas* is characterized by fickleness and vacillation. It is called the deliberative faculty. Behind the *manas* is *buddhi*, the discriminative faculty, the seat of will-power. *Buddhi* is the precious tool to discipline *manas*. Behind the *buddhi* is our real Self, the Atman,<sup>2</sup> the substratum of the entire human personality.

### How Do We Perceive?

Sound, touch, sight, taste and smell—these are the five different perceptions we get from the five windows, external organs. We need to trace the chain of perception. In the perception of sight, for example, the rays of light from the object strike the eye's retina, the impulse is carried to the brain—the instrument of the mind—then it goes to the mind, which presents it to *buddhi* (intellect), which groups the stimulus according to pre-conceived impressions and send a current of reaction in the reverse order: *buddhi* to *manas*, *manas* to the organ and the organ to the object. All this happens with the stationary substratum, the Atman—the eternal observer of this world show—in the background. Thus results the perception, 'I see.' Minus the external organs and objects, this chain holds good for dreams also—including daydreams. In dreams the external organs are inactive. We perceive mental objects created by our past impressions, with the help of the mind and the internal organs.

### Concentration, the Main Challenge

Our organs of knowledge are so constituted that they are ever eager to come into contact with their respective sense objects—the ears with a pleasing sound, the eyes with a pleasing sight, and so on. We saw that the chain of perception is Atman-*buddhi*-*manas*-organs-objects. *Buddhi*, the discriminative faculty, helps us discriminate between what is to be perceived and what is not, which thoughts are to be cultivated and which are not. With many people, however, the *buddhi* is not called upon to act: it is not discrimination but usually the circumstances or one's own inclinations (prompted by one's *saṁskāras*, men-

So *tapas* means concentration of the mind by choice—mine, not the mind's. The mind needs to be trained in concentration. Who is the trainer? The *buddhi*. When a person is convinced of the need of mind control and sets about training it, *buddhi* enters the picture.

tal impressions) that determine what one perceives or thinks.

Even when one is occupied in one's daily *repetitive* actions, the mind keeps vacillating, feels tense or confused. Only a few people go about their activities calmly. A student, for example, sits

with his book in hand during his stipulated study hours. Granted that there is no external disturbance, how long is he able to concentrate on the book in hand? An undisciplined mind runs about thinking of something that is to happen in the future or something that happened in the past. Intermittently it tries to dwell on the book in hand. This happens to everyone, whether in service, business or any other profession.

What is wrong? Why are we not able to concentrate? It is because the mind has not been subjected to anything like discipline. We want to do something, the mind has its own agenda. And in pursuit of that, the mind carries us, the discriminating self, also along with it. Says Sri Krishna in the *Bhagavadgītā*: 'If the mind yields to even one of the wandering senses, the mind carries away one's wisdom (*prajñā*) or the sense of discrimination, even as a gale carries away a ship off its course.'<sup>3</sup>

### Tapas is Concentration

Now we come to an important definition of *tapas* from the *Mahābhārata*: '*Manasaścendriyāṇām ca hyaikāgryam paramam tapaḥ; tajjyāyaḥ sarvadharmebhyaḥ sa dharmah para ucyate*. Concentration of the mind and the senses is the highest *tapas*. Since it is higher than all other virtues, it is called the highest virtue.'<sup>4</sup> The concentration of the mind and the senses on sense objects is something natural for them. They are constituted that way. As long as one is happy with this state of affairs, one does not

feel the necessity of mind control. One feels the need only when one's slavery to it gets on one's own nerves: when one is diverted by it from one's chosen task—work, studies or meditation.

So *tapas* means concentration of the mind by choice—mine, not the mind's. The mind needs to be trained in concentration. Who is the trainer? The *buddhi*. When a person is convinced of the need of mind control and sets about training it, *buddhi* enters the picture.

The *Kāthopanishad* compares *buddhi* to the charioteer in a chariot. The chariot can reach its destination only if the charioteer is wide awake and the horses (senses) are controlled. Similarly, the Upanishad continues, the goal of human life—the Supreme Abode of God—can be reached only with a disciplined sensory system (and the mind) and an awakened *buddhi*.<sup>5</sup>

An important points needs to be remembered here: Concentration of the mind and the senses on external objects, tasks in hand, is all right for life in the world. For spiritual life, however, the *buddhi* needs to detach the mind from the sense organs and direct it towards the indwelling Reality known as God or the Atman.

### Strengthening the Will

Any conscious action against our mental propensities means scoring a point against the rebelling mind. This results in strengthening the will, which is an attribute of *buddhi*. Swami Vivekananda considered this mind training and concentration the essence of education. 'If I had to do my education over again, and had any voice in the matter, I would not study facts at all. I would develop the power of concentration and detachment, and then with a perfect

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instrument I could collect facts at will. Side by side, in the child, should be developed the power of concentration and detachment.'<sup>6</sup>

A strong will-power is, again, the touchstone for fasts and vigils on auspicious days. A mere

vigil on a holy night like Mahashivaratri does not mean anything if simultaneously care is not exercised to keep the mind on higher things. Everything needs to be judged by the strengthening effect it has on the will, by the mind discipline it has effected. Such observances, if followed scrupulously, strengthen one's will-power, an indication that *buddhi* is awake and doing its job. A strong will is again a potent tool in spiritual life. It helps the aspirant maintain his struggle with the mind braving all odds.

### Work as Tapas

Can work be performed as *tapas*? Can it serve as a tool for mind control? That is what Swami Vivekananda precisely advocated:

When you are doing any work, do not think of anything beyond. Do it as worship, as the highest worship, and devote your whole life to it for the time being. ... It is the worker who is attached to results that grumbles about the nature of the duty which has fallen to his lot; to the unattached worker all duties are equally good, and form efficient instruments with which selfishness and sensuality may be killed, and the freedom of the soul secured. (1.71)

Just as the defects of a machine are not evident till it runs, the defects of our mind—desires, prejudices, passion—are not evident until we begin to work consciously. Swamiji wanted us to keep this consciousness uppermost in our mind: 'I am the Atman, the undying Spirit.' He advocated 'self-conscious activ-

ity' and never tired of rousing people to the glories inherent in their soul:

*None* is really weak; the soul is infinite, omnipotent, and omniscient. Stand up, assert yourself, proclaim the God within you, do not deny Him! Too much of inactivity, too much of weakness, too much of hypnotism has been and is upon our race. O ye modern Hindus, de-hypnotise yourselves. The way to do that is found in your own sacred books. Teach yourselves, teach everyone his real nature, call upon the sleeping soul and see how it awakes. Power will come, glory will come, goodness will come, purity will come, and everything that is excellent will come when this sleeping soul is roused to self-conscious activity. (3.193)

He never felt it was too early to teach Advaita to anyone: 'Even the least thing well done brings marvellous results; therefore let everyone do what little he can. If the fisherman thinks that he is the Spirit, he will be a better fisherman; if the student thinks he is the Spirit, he will be a better student. If the lawyer thinks that he is the Spirit, he will be a better lawyer, and so on ...' (3.245). By consciously bringing to bear the power of the Spirit on the work, a person betters not only himself, but also the quality of his work.

### Three Kinds of *Tapas*

Do we need something more specific on *tapas*? The *Bhagavadgītā* describes three kinds: austerity of body, speech and mind:

Worship of the gods, of the twice-born, of teachers and of the wise; cleanliness, uprightness, continence and non-violence—these are said to

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be austerity of the body. Words that do not offend anyone and that are truthful, pleasant and beneficial, and also the regular recitation of the Vedas—these are said to be the austerity of speech. Serenity of mind, gentleness, silence, self-control and purity of heart—these constitute the austerity of the mind.<sup>7</sup>

All these practices are aimed at awakening the *buddhi*, making it take charge of the mind, release it from the hold of the senses and focus it on the in-

dwelling Reality, the Atman. Repetition of the divine name, offering the fruits of one's actions to God, prayer and meditation are also *tapas* for a spiritual aspirant in that they serve the same purpose.

\* \* \*

In sum, *tapas* is concentration of the mind and the senses, a requisite even for worldly prosperity. In spiritual life, *tapas* helps awaken the *buddhi*, strengthens the will-power and steers the aspirant towards the ultimate Goal.

### References

1. *Indriyāṇāṁ manaścāsmi* —*Bhagavadgītā*, 10.22. [Hereafter *Gītā*.]
2. See *Gītā*, 3.42.
3. *ibid.*, 2.67.
4. *Mahābhārata*, 'Śānti Parva', 250.4.
5. *Kaṭhopanishad*, 1.3.3-9.
6. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 9 vols. (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1-8, 1989; 9, 1997), vol. 6, pp. 38-9.
7. *Gītā*, 17.14-16.





# Prabuddha Bharata—100 Years Ago



August 1902

## IN MEMORIAM: SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Money can procure bread and butter only; do not consider, therefore, as if it were thy sole end and aim.

Gurus can be had by hundreds, but good *chelas* (disciples) are very rare.

The moth once seeing the light never returns to darkness; the ant dies in the sugar-heap but never retreats therefrom. Similarly a good devotee sacrifices his life for his God by renunciation.

(Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna)

The above sayings of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa were among those that struck us as characteristic of the sage when, some time ago, we read, for the first time, his biography written by the late Prof. Max Muller. And they may be said to epitomise the suggestions which the late Swami Vivekananda's life makes to the large and admiring world he last week left behind him. Swamiji's choice of the ideal of a spiritual as opposed to a material life, his successful attempt to wear Ramakrishna's mantle and to deserve it, and his great renunciation—these are the three key-notes of his short and sweet life. There is perhaps one more idea which has been carried out by Swami Vivekananda, though it does not appear to have formed the subject of any of his Guru's sayings; and it is that a sage should use patriotism as a fulcrum for the operation of his spiritual power and *tapas*. It is this last, perhaps, which made the difference between the practical aspects of the life of the great sage and his illustrious disciple; for whereas Sri Ramakrishna personally realised supreme bliss in a spiritual trance, Swami Vivekananda realised it in superinducing something like a trance of enchantment upon his fellow-countrymen, by the magic of eloquent preaching with a view to rousing them into patriotic action.

In Swami Vivekananda, therefore, we lose a patriot-sage who deserves the foremost rank among the national workers of the present age. Of the life-story of this extraordinary man the facts are as well known as they are few. His original name was Narendra Nath Dutt. He was born in a Kayastha family and like hundreds of other common *alumni* of the University, he was educated, English fashion, and graduated himself in the usual course of things. It was of course, predicted of him by an astrologer, even in his young age, that he would never enter the path of *Grihasthashrama* or worldly life. But such a prediction could not then mean anything perhaps except a vague sort of despair to his mother who probably, like most mothers, looked forward to his becoming a pleader or a clerk, earn a living and support a family. There is also no record to show what idea the Swami himself had of his future. All that is known is that his acquaintance with Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa discovered to them both a vast but latent fund of spiritual potentiality in boy Narendra, and the Guru's blessings and affection soon settled the course of the disciple's future. He resolved to renounce a worldly career, and to devote all his powers and energies to go forth preaching the gospel of *practical Vedantism*.

He then seriously studied and practised Yoga; and as preliminary to a career of a preaching hermit, he travelled to all parts of India, and especially in the Himalayan regions, where he expected to meet with *Siddhas* and *Tapaswins* of ancient date. As he had occasion to incidentally relate later on in his lectures, Swami Vivekananda could, in these travels, learn to nerve his constitution for physical

hardships. He described himself then as 'a man who had met starvation face to face for fourteen years of life, had not known what to eat the next day and where to sleep, a man who dared to live, where the thermometer registered thirty degrees below zero, almost without clothes.' It was during these travels that the Swami chanced to come to Poona, and proceeded to Mahabaleshwar, the fair weather visitors from where that year brought back interesting impressions about a highly educated Swami who 'talked beautiful philosophy'. In the course of these travels, he visited Madras where he was being induced to deliver his first public lecture but steadily refused to do so. But the *elite* of the Madras public was charmed by his conversations; and it was at Madras that the Swami's resolve to go to America to preach Vedanta there assumed a definite shape and also received encouragement and support. The announcement of the gathering of the Parliament of the world's religions also coincided with the above events, and though, as the Swami himself told a Calcutta audience in 1897, 'his mission in America was not for the Parliament of religions, but that it was only something in the way, an opening, an opportunity', still the Parliament was his immediate objective when he sailed to America in 1893; and it was also at this Parliament that he first made himself famous.

It is now well known how successful was the Swami's performance on the platform of the Parliament of the world's religions at Chicago. His appearance there was the bursting of the Vedantic bomb-shell among the mob of Christian sects, and the charm of his personal magnetism proved so patent, that even his opponents could not help liking him. The *New York Critic* certified that 'the most impressive figure of the Parliament was Swami Vivekananda. No one expressed so well the spirit of the Parliament as did the Hindu monk. He is an orator by divine right.' The *Iowa State Register* had the following: 'During his stay in the city, which was happily prolonged, Vivekananda met many of the best people in the city who found their time well spent in discussing religious and metaphysical questions with him. But woe to the man who undertook to combat the monk on his own ground, and that was where they all tried it who tried it at all. His replies came like flashes of lightning and the venturesome questioner was sure to be impaled on the Indian's shining intellectual lance. The working of his mind, so subtle and so brilliant, so well stored and so well trained, sometimes dazzled his hearers; but it was always a most interesting study. Vivekananda and his cause found a place in the hearts of all true Christians.'

Encouraged by his reception, Swami Vivekananda found it easy to carry out his plan of establishing a school for teaching Vedanta to the Americans, and the fruits of persistent teaching for two years were to be seen in the many converts to Hinduism that he made in the ranks of Christian ladies and gentlemen. In 1896 the Swami visited England, where he met and was entertained by Prof. Max Muller; and here we have the first-hand appreciation of the great European sage by the Indian sage. Writing to the *Brahmavadin* of Madras in June 1896, he thus paints Prof. Max Muller: 'That nice little house surrounded by a beautiful garden, the silver-headed sage with a face calm and benign, and a forehead smooth as a child's, in spite of seventy winters, and every line in that face speaking of a deep-seated mine of spirituality somewhere behind—the trees, the flowers, the calmness of the clear sky—all these sent me back in imagination to the glorious days of ancient India, the days of our Brahmacharins and our Rajarshis—the days of our Vanaprasthas, the days of our Arundhati and Vasishta.' Max Muller had by this time published his article on Ramakrishna in the *Nineteenth Century* under the heading of 'A Real Mahatma'; and the Professor, full of Ramakrishnaism for the moment, was naturally very pleased to enjoy Swami Vivekananda's company; for, as he expressed it himself, 'it is not every day that one meets a disciple of Ramakrishna Paramahansa!'

As regards the Swami's creed, it is well known that he was a Vedantin. He preached *advaita*; but he was not a bigoted *advaitin*; for he regarded that both the *dvaita* and the *advaita* schools had their

own use. As he explained in an address on 'The Vedanta in Its Application to Indian Life' at Madras, 'the *dualist* and the *advaitist* need not fight each other. Each has a place and a great place in the national life. The *dualist* must remain; he is as much part and parcel of the national religious life as the *advaitist*. One cannot exist without the other; one is the fulfilment of the other; one is the building, the other is the top; the one is the root, the other the fruit.' He regarded Vedanta from the practical point of view, and though himself a follower of Shankaracharya, he did not hesitate to prefer Ramanuja in certain respects. 'Shankara with his great intellect,' says he, 'had not, I am afraid, as great a heart. Ramanuja's heart was greater. He felt for the downtrodden, he sympathised with them. He took up the ceremonies, the accretions that had gathered, made them pure so far as could be, and instituted new ceremonies, new methods of worship for the people who absolutely required these; at the same time he opened the door to the highest spiritual worship from the Brahmin to the Pariah.' He himself was for popularising religious knowledge and worship. In his address on 'The Future of India', the Swami expressed his intentions as follows:

'My idea is first of all to bring out these gems of spirituality that are, as it were, stored up in our books and in the possession of a few, hidden, as it were, in the monasteries and the forests; not only the knowledge from the hands where it is hidden, but the still more inaccessible chest, the language in which it was preserved, the incrustations of the centuries of Sanskrit words.'

He did not want, however, to degrade or depreciate Sanskrit, for Sanskrit was to him equivalent to 'Prestige'. His idea to bring spiritual knowledge in the forum also did not originate in his hate for the Brahmin. Far from it. He did not want to bring down the Brahmins, but to raise the non-Brahmins up. His solution of the caste problem was 'to bring about the *levelling ideas* of caste by making the other castes appropriate the culture and education which is the strength of the highest caste'. The ideal according to him at one end is the Brahmin, and the ideal at the other end is the Chandala, and the whole work is to raise the Chandala up to the Brahmin. Of course, the days of exclusive privileges and exclusive claims are gone, and it is the duty of the Brahmin, therefore, to work for the salvation of the rest of mankind in India, and to stick to his spiritual ideals.

As to the means of improving the condition of the people and creating a spirit of nationality in India, he held well-defined views; and spiritual enthusiast that he was, he looked at everything through religion. Thus in his lecture on 'My Plan of Campaign', delivered at Madras, the Swami maintained that 'in India, social reform has to be preached by showing how much more spiritual a life the new system will bring, and politics has to be preached by showing how much it will be the one thing the nation wants, viz. its spirituality.' On another occasion he said, 'Not only is it true that the ideal of religion is the highest ideal; in the case of India it is the only possible ideal of work; work in any other line, without first strengthening this, would be disastrous.'

But he was not content with preaching the cause of spiritualism in India. It was his ambition to carry his mission to distant lands, and in this respect he excelled the greatest Bengalee reformer—we mean, Raja Ram Mohun Roy. He felt inspired by a noble ambition of retaliating upon those who had so long taken the aggressive [stand] and encroached upon the domain of Hinduism. He had a double purpose that could be, in his opinion, served by Indians going out to foreign countries. 'We cannot do,' he said, 'without the world outside India. It was our foolishness that we thought we could, and we have paid the penalty by about a thousand years of slavery. All such foolish ideas that Indians must not go out of India, are childish. They must be knocked on the head; the more you go out and travel among the nations of the world, the better for you and your country.' Again:

'The sign of life is expansion; we must go out, expand, show life or degrade, fester and die; there is no other alternative.' But there was also another reason why we should go out. 'Nations with

their political lives have foreign policies. When they find too much quarelling at home they look for somebody abroad to quarrel with and the quarrel at home stops.' Our foreign policy, however, can be for the present only spiritual and not political. Our policy must be to go abroad and preach the truth of our Shastras to the nations of the world. It is by carrying out this foreign policy that we could do our sacred duty of imparting spiritual knowledge to others as well as win their respect for ourselves. 'We will not be students always but teachers also. There cannot be friendship without equality and there cannot be equality when one party is always the teacher and the other party always sits at the feet. If you want to become equal with the Englishman or the American, you will have to teach as well as to learn; and you have plenty yet to teach to the world for centuries to come.'

The Indians are a conquered people, yet they have their own conquests to make. 'The gift of India is the gift of religion and philosophy, and wisdom and spirituality, and religion does not want cohorts to march before its path and clear its way. ... Like the gentle dew that falls unseen and unheard and yet brings into blossom the fairest of roses, so has been the contribution of India to the thought of the world. ... I am an imaginative man and my idea is the conquest of the whole world by the Hindu race.' He bitterly felt that India had completely degenerated; and his idea of curing her was to make her recognise that in spiritualism lay her strength and what was wanted was only faith in herself. The difference between the Englishman and the Indian he explained by saying that the Englishman believed in himself, whereas the Indian did not. 'He believes in his being an Englishman and he can do anything he likes. You have been told and taught that you can do nothing; and non-entities you are becoming every day.' That his diagnosis of the disease was correct he amply proved by his own action and example. For it is due to him that the seeds of Vedantism have been sown in the American soil and the name of India is being respected in that distant land.

The few selections that we have given above at random from his several speeches, will at once show the great breadth of the Swami's views and the intense spiritual patriotism that he felt. Can the death of such a man be regarded as anything less than a national calamity? We really doubt whether the last century produced another man within whom such true patriotism was combined with such religious fervour. Bengal produced Ram Mohun Roy and Keshub Chunder Sen, who in their own way attempted to introduce the light of the East into the West. ... But none of them succeeded so well as the Swami in pushing the campaign of aggressive Vedantism into the hearts of the Europeans and the Americans. Possibly the Swami came on the scene when the ground was better prepared for him by rationalising scientists who have rudely shaken Christian belief, but possibly also the Swami possessed that dash and that intense love for Hinduism, which both Ram Mohun Roy and Keshub Chunder Sen lacked. The latter, it is notorious, leaned dangerously towards Christianity and the strength of the former lay rather in exposing the defects of Hinduism. Naturally enough, therefore, none of them succeeded in getting a hold over the popular mind; and though they won admiration from Europeans, they could not make Hinduism as respected as it is today owing to the efforts of Swami Vivekananda.

The Swami's career has been brief, and like a meteor of the first magnitude, he lighted up the face of his country and went down the horizon—all within ten short years. It is men like him that our country needs most at the present time; and though he is gone, the glory of his example will, we trust, remain long behind him.

*The Mahratta*, Poona, 13 July

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# Vivekananda: Conqueror of Death!

LINDA PRUGH

## Part III : His Voice Reverberates!

After Swami Vivekananda's death on Friday evening, 4 July 1902, his brother monks, his own disciples, and devotees everywhere were immersed in sorrow and a desperate sense of loss. For many the world now seemed empty. He had been a presence that lighted up their lives. He had been a force inspiring them in countless ways to make their lives meaningful. He himself had given pure meaning to life, giving hope to thousands that the world could indeed be deified and seen as beautiful by worshipping God everywhere. Now that great source of inspiration and guidance was gone.

### 'I Will Miss His Great Love'

Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi, spiritual consort of Sri Ramakrishna, was greatly saddened by the loss of her beloved spiritual son. When he died she happened to be away in Jayrambati. When the sad news reached her she cried out: 'Alas! My Naren is gone.'<sup>1</sup> Then for three days she remained silent. Often she was heard crying, and sometimes she was heard to say to the Master with wounded feelings: 'Master, did you ask me to remain in this world only to see the death of my children?' Later, she told a devotee: 'The Master used to say that Naren was the crown jewel of his head. One day he told me: "Naren has all good signs except two: He breathes heavily, and he eats more than he should." I asked him what the consequences of these two signs would be. Then the Master said, "These are the signs of a short life."' <sup>2</sup> In later years, Holy Mother treasured a piece of cloth that Swami Vivekanan-

da had given her. She kept it in a special box and asked her attendants to take extra care with that cloth when arranging the box's contents.<sup>3</sup>

For his brother disciples particularly, Vivekananda's death was almost unbearable. Their guru, Sri Ramakrishna, had bound these young men together with love that went deeper than any of them had ever known, and that love had enabled them to form the Ramakrishna Order and to keep it going, despite many severe obstacles, all under the Master's chosen leader, his beloved Naren. In addition, the monks knew that the Master had turned over his powers to Narendra and that he had worked through him the past sixteen years to spread the message of Vedanta all over the world. The monks had known that to follow Swamiji was to follow their beloved Master and to feel his living presence. For many of them, the pain of physical separation from Swamiji was agonizing. As quoted earlier, Swami Premananda began his letter of 20 August to Swami Abhedananda with the words, 'We are now in a state of living death.'

Swami Adbhutananda was at Balaram Basu's house in Calcutta when he was told that Swamiji had died. Instead of going to the Math, he stayed completely away. When told that people were talking about his not going to see Swamiji, he replied with a heavy heart: 'Let them talk. Will their talk heal my pain? They do not know how much my Brother Vivekananda loved me! I will miss his great love for me. His love for me was second only to the Master's. Now he is gone.'<sup>4</sup> He could not



speak another word.

When Swami Akhandananda heard the news of Swamiji's passing away, he was in Sargachhi. He rushed to Belur Math and cried for his beloved brother monk. For a few days he stayed at the Math with his brother disciples, but he was deeply depressed and felt only emptiness all around. Later he recalled what happened when he went to Calcutta a week later. He told Josephine MacLeod: 'I have seen Swamiji after his passing away as clearly as I see you now, otherwise I could not live. Separation was so painful! I was going to commit suicide but was prevented by Swamiji. He caught my hand when I was about to jump under a running tram.' This vision filled his heart with joy and inspiration.<sup>5</sup>

Swami Brahmananda was deeply affected by Swamiji's death, and in the coming months he sought refuge in the only source for true peace by going on pilgrimage where he could plunge deep into spiritual practice.<sup>6</sup>

Swami Shivananda had left for Varanasi in the fourth week of June to found the Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama, adjacent to the Home of Service, in Varanasi. It was dedicated on 4 July. When news came to him of Swamiji's passing away, it was an incalculable blow.<sup>7</sup>

Swami Vijnanananda was in Allahabad on 4 July, when Swamiji died. On that very day Vijnanananda had been meditating in the shrine of the Brahnavadin Club and had a vision of Swamiji seated on the lap of Sri Ramakrishna. Vijnanananda had become very anxious about Swamiji. He wondered, 'Why have I seen Swamiji in this way?' The next day he received a cable from Belur Math with the sad news.<sup>8</sup>

When Swamiji died, Swami Turiyananda was aboard ship, travelling from San Francisco to India. In poor health, he had left America after nearly three years of teaching in order to be with Swamiji again. As the ship passed Rangoon, he received a terrific shock when he learned from a fellow passenger's

newspaper of Swamiji's passing. His plans for future work were completely crushed, and he decided that he would not return to the West but would spend the remaining part of his life in meditation and austerity. Burning with renunciation, he threw his Western clothes and his precious watch into the ocean. He lost all interest in work and even in the bare necessities of life. When he reached Calcutta on 14 July, Saradananda and a number of monks came to the pier to receive him. When he disembarked, he put his arms around Saradananda and burst into tears.<sup>9</sup>

Swami Saradananda later wrote to Swami Abhedananda: '[Swamiji] has departed after having played his part. Now it is for you, Rakhal, and others to find out ways to continue the work started by him. [Turiyananda] arrived here 15 days after the passing away of Swamiji. You can very well imagine his mental condition! He is completely brokenhearted.'<sup>10</sup>

On 16 October 1902, Turiyananda wrote to Josephine MacLeod about Swamiji's passing:

It was with greatest satisfaction that I received your very affectionate letter the other day. It consoled me a good deal to be told that Swamiji was not disgusted with me but was satisfied with my loyalty and devotedness to his cause. It was extremely unfortunate that I could not see him again. But we must learn to bear what cannot be mended. ... [The shock of hearing of his death] was too severe for me to stand. It stunned me outright, and I have not been able to recover from its effects yet. ...

As about Swamiji, I can assure you it was no death to him. He passed out as you say consciously and willingly in samadhi. ... It is true he needed rest very badly and this world could never have given him that rest. It is therefore a consolation to think that he will have that rest now to prepare himself for the task he took upon himself to perform—the regeneration of the world.<sup>11</sup>

After Swamiji's death, Swami Trigunatananda deeply felt his passing. As soon as he

was able to, he went to the West to take up the work in San Francisco, where he was very much needed, due to Swami Turiyananda's return to India.<sup>12</sup>

On 5 July, the Vedanta Society of New York received a cable from Swami Saradananda communicating the fact of Swamiji's passing. When details were received by the American press, almost all big city newspapers carried the story in a prominent position. When news of his death reached Chicago, it was so unexpected that some could not believe it. Some of the swami's close admirers wrote letters to Swami Abhedananda to confirm what they had read.

Moni Bagchi, in *Swami Abhedananda: The Spiritual Biography*, has written:

The sudden death of his leader was just like a bolt from the blue to Swami Abhedananda who was so far away from the monastic headquarters at Belur. Gone was the man who wanted to impart into future religion a dynamic urge calculated to benefit the individual as well as humanity as a whole at the same time. ... Past memories crowded over his mind—memories of those days at Dakshineswar, Shyampukur, Alambazar and also at some pilgrimages. As he sat alone in his room ... with the silence of the night around him, brooding over the past days in company of his beloved leader, Swami Abhedananda's mind, it might be conjectured, was overcast not with any sense of sorrow, but with a sense of greater responsibility to carry on with unflagging zeal the sacred task of preaching the gospel of Vedanta in the West.<sup>13</sup>

Swami Abhedananda arranged for a memorial service to be held at the Vedanta Society of New York on 26 October 1902. The swami himself gave a stirring and intense address. Extracts of letters from brother disciples were read, and several devotees of Swamiji spoke. For many years after that, an annual memorial service for Swamiji was held by the Society. At the 1903 memorial service, Swami Abhedananda stated:

I lived and travelled with this great spiritual brother of mine, saw him day after day and

night after night, and watched his character for nearly twenty years, and I stand here to assure you that I have not found another like him in these three continents and that no one can take the place of this wonderful personage. As a man his character was pure and spotless; as a philosopher, he was the greatest of all Eastern and Western philosophers. ...

Many have asked me why so great and good a man must die. I have said: Why should he not die? His task was finished. One ordinary human body was not enough, nor twenty, nor a hundred for such tremendous energy. Such an intense intellect and spirituality would soon dissolve the granite foundation stones.

Vivekananda is not dead, he is with us, now and forever. He is the Senior Brother to the whole world.<sup>14</sup>

### **'Vivekananda Has Shaken the World!'**

Devotees at the Vedanta Society of San Francisco also held a memorial service. Their tribute to the swami was published in the August 1902 *Pacific Vedantin* and in the October issue of the *Brahmavadin* in India. It reads in part:

As he loved and revered his Master, so we will love and cherish his sacred memory. ... He was one of the greatest souls that has visited the earth for many centuries. An incarnation of his Master, of Krishna, Buddha, Christ, and all other great souls. ... His was a twin soul to that of his Master, who represented the whole philosophy of all religions, be they ancient or modern. Vivekananda has shaken the whole world with his sublime thoughts, and they will echo down through the halls of time until time shall be no more. To him all people and all creeds were one. He had the patience of Christ and the generosity of the sun that shines, and the air of heaven. To him a child could talk, a beggar, a prince, a slave or harlot. He said: 'They are all of one family. I can see myself in all of them and they in me. The world is one family, and its parent an Infinite Ocean of Reality, Brahman.'<sup>15</sup>

For Swamiji's own disciples, separation from their guru was like death to them. His very first disciple, Swami Sadananda, was present at the Math when Vivekananda died.

Looking down at the body of Swamiji, he wept, feeling like an orphan. He thought: 'Fourteen years ago I followed Swamiji. I was born to serve him. Swamiji is not alive anymore, so I do not feel like living anymore either.'<sup>16</sup> Sadananda later said, 'Swamiji is always within me and protecting me.'<sup>17</sup>

Mrs Charlotte Sevier, Sister Christine, and Swamis Prakashananda, Swarupananda and Vimalananda as well as Swamiji's brother disciple Subodhananda were all at Mayavati when news of Swamiji's passing reached them, immersing them in grief. With drooping hearts, they bravely carried on the work only because founding this Ashrama devoted to Advaita had meant so much to Swamiji, and because publication of *Prabuddha Bharata*, which he had also founded, depended on their unflagging service.

Swami Virajananda had been away from Mayavati for ten months, collecting subscriptions for *Prabuddha Bharata*. He was in Ahmedabad when he received word of Swamiji's passing. Sadly, he returned to Mayavati. Swami Vivekananda had once said about Virajananda, 'Whatever others can do, Virajananda alone can do ten times that amount of work.' And in 1901 he had written to Mrs Sevier and Swami Swarupananda asking them to send Virajananda to Belur Math to serve as one of his attendants, if he could be spared without affecting the work at Mayavati. They had, however, written back, 'Should [Virajananda] suddenly come away giving up that work [enrolling subscribers for *Prabuddha Bharata* from western India], the cause of *Prabuddha Bharata* will immensely suffer.' So Virajananda, who was away from Mayavati at that time, had not been informed of Swamiji's request. It was only now, after Swamiji's mahasamadhi, that Virajananda was finally told that Swamiji had wanted him to come to Belur Math. He was broken-hearted that he had not been given the opportunity to serve Swamiji in his last days. Virajananda then went into solitude a short distance from the Ashrama, and plunged into

vigorous spiritual disciplines, practising *japa* and meditation fifteen hours a day. Gradually he was able to recover his stamina and zeal for work.<sup>18</sup>

Following Vivekananda's mahasamadhi, Swami Nischayananda's mind was heavy and he cried a lot. One day he burst into tears and prayed to Swami Saradananda: 'I was here for Swamiji. Now he is gone. I don't want to stay here anymore.' Swami Saradananda asked him to stay at least one more month at the Math. This he did, but when that time was up, he left and never returned. He travelled and practised spiritual disciplines. For all his life, he looked first at the photograph of Swamiji when he awoke. He would even cover his face until he could look at that picture.<sup>19</sup>

### 'Let Us Make Our Lives Like His'

Swami Paramananda had been one of Swamiji's last monastic disciples, receiving his sannyasa vows from him in January 1902, then going to Madras to help Ramakrishnananda with the work at the Ashrama. Paramananda was also present in Madras when word came of Swamiji's passing. Like Ramakrishnananda, he was stunned and plunged in sorrow. After that, he rarely spoke of his guru, but he silently determined to make his whole life and character reflect that of Swamiji. Years later he would say of Vivekananda: 'We do not honour a great soul by speaking words of praise of him, but by making our lives like his!'<sup>20</sup>

In 1901, Swamis Shubhananda and Achalananda had begun in a small way giving aid to destitute people in Varanasi who were ill. Their little organization was called Poor Men's Relief Association. In March 1902 when Swamiji visited Varanasi with Kakuzo Okakura, he suggested that the name be changed to Ramakrishna Home of Service. Swami Vivekananda said at that time, 'This ashrama is my last work.' On 4 July 1902 Swami Shivananda, as has been mentioned, was in Varanasi to found the Ramakrishna Advaita

Ashrama, adjacent to the Home of Service. Then a cable arrived from Calcutta that Swamiji had passed on the evening of the 4th. It was a terrible blow to all the monks.<sup>21</sup>

After Swamiji died, Swami Atmananda got a tremendous shock. He thought: 'Why should I live anymore? My guru is dead.' He gave up food and sleep and began a severe programme of austerity. Gradually others were able to bring him back to his regular monastic life. He always said: 'Swamiji was born as a part of Shiva. Such a great teacher has never come to this world.' Swami Atmananda was known among the young disciples of Swamiji for being extremely clean. Knowing that Swamiji appreciated the cleanliness of his bed, Atmananda was always particular about keeping it neat and clean. In later days, when other monks asked about his habit, he told them: 'In Belur Math Swamiji would sometimes lie down on each monk's bed to test its cleanliness. One day after he died I dreamed he lay down on my bed, so I keep the bed always ready for Swamiji.'<sup>22</sup>

### 'The Whole Country Has Thrilled to It!'

Josephine MacLeod was in London when Swamiji died. As related in her reminiscences, she wept for years. She wrote: 'They cabled me on the fourth of July, "Swami attained nirvana." For days I was stunned. I never answered it. And then the desolation that seemed to fill my life made me weep for years and it was only after I read Maeterlinck who said, "If you have been greatly influenced by anyone, prove it in your life, and not by your tears", that I never wept again.'<sup>23</sup>

Grieving herself, Sister Christine wrote a letter of consolation to Josephine MacLeod:

They tell me that we sorrow only for ourselves and that it is all selfishness however refined it may be. Perhaps so—yet the human cries out. Yet while for me life is finished, for him this is Freedom Absolute. I try to think of that and that alone. We would not have him back suffering in body, tortured in mind—no, not even for one

hour, would we? We would rather gladly suffer the pains and bear the sense of loss. I love to think of him 'sitting in Eternal Meditation'.<sup>24</sup>

And Sister Christine also wrote to Sara Bull: 'It is something to know that [Swamiji] found rest and peace in the certainty that he could trust and that the ideals would always be guarded and protected for him. ... "This life must be a sacrifice to India," he said, and a sacrifice it was to the very last moment of it.'<sup>25</sup>

Sister Nivedita wrote many times to friends about Swamiji's passing:

I have scarcely a touch of sorrow—so great seems to me the Victory—so pure—so flawless. Swamiji is ours today as he has never been. The poor tortured body is released. We are only beginning to know the sweetness of the Great and Will beyond. (p. 478)

To go just as he went is held to be *the* triumphant way—the Sannyasi death. The whole country has thrilled to it! It was on the Dark Night of Kali too, which means that the body is not necessarily resumed, unless he will [it]. He had risen beyond it even while in it. (p. 490)

And twelve days after Swamiji's mahasamadhi, Nivedita wrote to Josephine MacLeod:

Do you realize how ideally great the last scene has been? How even enemies catch their breath and worship? Quietly to put the body down as a worn-out garment at the end of an evening meditation! 'That will be a great death that I shall die, saying Hara! Hara! Hara!' ... I remember his saying long ago. And it has come true. With the laurels green—with all things in order—with the shield undimmed—he went. (p. 481)

He went out—as one drops a loose garment. Without a struggle. 'Conqueror of Death.' But he has NOT left us. For my part, he has been with me far far more since that night than for 2 years before—and I trust and pray that this may not cease to be. ... (p. 492)

### 'Religion Is Living Seed'

All over India, memorial services were held. Swami Vivekananda was lauded in dozens of eulogies, poems and written tributes. Sister Nivedita wrote 'The National Signifi-

cance of the Swami Vivekananda's Life and Work' for publication in *The Hindu*, 27 July 1902. Excerpts from that paper follow:

[Vivekananda] passed when the laurels of his first achievements were yet green. He passed when new and greater calls were ringing in his ears. Quietly, in the beautiful home of his illness, the intervening years with some few breaks, went by amongst plants and animals, unostentatiously training the disciples who gathered round him, silently ignoring the great fame that had shone upon his name. *Man-making* was his own stern, brief summary of the work that was worth doing. And laboriously, unflaggingly, day after day, he set himself to man-making, playing the part of Guru, of father, even of school master, by turns. ...

He made no personal claim. He told no personal story. One whom he knew and trusted long had never heard that he held any position of distinction amongst his Gurubhais. He made no attempt to popularize with strangers any single form or creed, whether of God or Guru. Rather, through him the mighty torrent of Hinduism poured forth its cooling waters upon the intellectual and spiritual worlds, fresh from its secret sources in Himalayan snows. A witness to the vast religious culture of Indian homes and holy men he could never cease to be. Yet he quoted nothing but the Upanishads. He taught nothing but the Vedanta. And men trembled, for they heard the voice for the first time of the religious teacher who feared not truth. ...

Burning renunciation was chief of all the inspiration that spoke to us through him. ... Yet the self-same destiny that filled him with this burning thirst of intense vairagya embodied in him also the ideal householder, full of the yearning to protect and save, eager to learn and teach the use of materials, reaching out towards the reorganization and reordering of life. ... It may be said that just as in St Francis of Assisi the yellow robe of the Indian Sannyasin gleams for a moment in the history of the Catholic Church, so in Vivekananda the great saint—abbots of Western monasticism are born anew in the East. ...

He lived at a moment of national disintegration, and he was fearless of the new. He lived when men were abandoning their inheritance,

and he was an ardent worshipper of the old. In him the national destiny fulfilled itself—that a new wave of consciousness should be inaugurated always in the leaders of the Faith. In such a man it may be that we possess the whole Veda of the future. We must remember, however, that the moment has not come for gauging the religious significance of Vivekananda. Religion is living seed, and his sowing is but over. The time of his harvest is not yet. ...

What then was the prophecy that Vivekananda left to his own people? With what national significance has he filled that gerrua mantle that he dropped behind him in his passing? Is it for us perhaps to lift the yellow rags upon our flagpole, and carry them forward as our banner?

Assuredly. For here was a man who never dreamt of failure. Here was a man who spoke of naught but strength. Supremely free from sentimentality, supremely defiant of all authority ... he refused to meet any foreigner save as the Master. ...

It never occurred to him that his own people were in any respect less than the equals of any other nation whatsoever. Being well aware that Religion was their national expression, he was also aware that the strength which they might display in that sphere would be followed before long by every other conceivable form of strength. ...

... True, his greater heart embraced the alien's need, sounding a universal promise to the world. But he never sought for help, or begged assistance. He never leaned on any. What might be done, it was the doer's privilege to do, not the recipient's to accept. He had neither fears nor hopes from without. To re-assert that which was India's essential self, and leave the great stream of the national life, strong in a fresh self-confidence and vigour, to find its own way to the ocean, this was the meaning of his Sannyas. ...

Buddha had preached renunciation, and in two centuries India had become an Empire. Let her but once more feel the great pulse through all her veins, and no power on earth would stand before her newly-awakened energy. Only it would be in her *own* life that she would find life, not in imitation; from her own proper past and environment that she would draw inspiration, not from the foreigner.



For he who thinks himself weak *is* weak; he who believes that he is strong is already invincible. And so, for his nation, as for every individual, Vivekananda had but one word—one constantly reiterated message: 'Awake! Arise! Struggle on! And stop not till the Goal is reached!'<sup>26</sup>

### 'Men Come of Themselves Now'

It was probably about six months after Swamiji died that Sister Nivedita wrote to Josephine MacLeod (called Yum):

[Swamiji] cried for men, dear Yum. But he did not know that until the curtain had fallen, it would not be clear what was the idea for which he had lived. When that idea should stand revealed, men would flock round him in millions. As Ramakrishna was unconscious—even so was he, who never dreamt that he was or could be unconscious. Men come of themselves now. No one is necessary. He is the magnet—and that draws the steel dust of itself.<sup>27</sup>

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Swami Vivekananda was a true hero whose life continues today to draw devotees to the teachings of Ramakrishna and Vedanta. Swamiji was a true hero because he was a knower of Brahman, which is Reality and Truth. Because he knew Truth, he was fearless. Because he was fearless, he was strong. He was master over his own life, and he was master over his own death. As he said, he would continue to inspire the world, and today we find that the world is permeated with his message in many forms. Still, we must remember that he himself declared that it would take a long time for the world to understand the contribution he had made. On 11 April 1906 Nivedita, with her far-sightedness, wrote the following prophetic and hopeful words to Josephine MacLeod:

I can see that the era of world workers is quickly passing away, but I do think we ought to have a nucleus in Europe, before the movement of Ramakrishna settles down to the silent thought germination which must come. ... You see,

when we who understood Swamiji, and remember him, are dead, there will come a long period of obscurity and silence, for the work that he did. It will *seem* to be forgotten, until, suddenly, in 150 or 200 years, it will be found to have transformed the West.<sup>28</sup>

Today, one hundred years after his triumphant passing, Swami Vivekananda's voice continues to reverberate, reminding us again and again to struggle and try to understand and imbibe the ancient message of strength, fearlessness and freedom that is Vedanta. As we continue to struggle, we feel that he is close by, that he believes in us completely, and that he is helping us every step of the way. \*

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### Swami Vivekananda's Prescription for Greatness

Do not expect success in a day or a year. Always hold on to the highest. Be steady. Avoid jealousy and selfishness. Be obedient and eternally faithful to the cause of truth, humanity, and your country, and you will move the world. Remember it is the *person*, the life, which is the secret of power—nothing else. Keep this letter and read the last lines whenever you feel worried or jealous. Jealousy is the bane of all slaves. It is the bane of our nation. Avoid that always. All blessings attend you and all success.

—*CW*, 5.108

Even the greatest fool can accomplish a task if it be after his heart. But the intelligent man is he who can convert every work into one that suits his taste. No work is petty. Everything in this world is like a banyan-seed, which, though appearing tiny as a mustard-seed, has yet the gigantic banyan tree latent within it. He indeed is intelligent who notices this and succeeds in making all work truly great. ...

Now you see you must try to think out original ideas—else, as soon as I die, the whole thing will tumble to pieces. ...

Lastly, you must remember I expect more from my children than from my brethren. I want each one of my children to be a hundred times greater than I could ever be. Every one of you must be a giant—must, that is my word. Obedience, readiness, and love for the cause—if you have these three, nothing can hold you back.

—*CW*, 7.508-9

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# What is Philosophy?

S K MAITRA

The word 'philosophy' is derived from the Greek words 'philos' (love) and 'sophia' (knowledge). Philosophy, therefore, etymologically means love of knowledge. But it soon acquires a special meaning. It is not any and every knowledge which is the subject matter of philosophy, but the supreme or ultimate knowledge. In fact, the Greeks made it clear that by knowledge they did not mean what we ordinarily call knowledge, which they were not prepared to call knowledge and preferred to designate by the term 'opinion'. By knowledge, therefore, they meant the ultimate knowledge, and it is in this sense that philosophy means love of knowledge.

The conception of philosophy has varied, therefore, naturally in different ages with different ideas regarding what is considered the highest knowledge. In India philosophy has been regarded in different times as the knowledge of the difference between *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti*, or as the knowledge of the identity of *jīva* and Brahman, or as that which leads to emancipation.

## Subject Matter of Philosophy

It has often been brought forward as a serious charge against philosophy that it is not quite clear about its subject matter: when we talk of biology, physics or chemistry, we know exactly what we mean, but we do not have a clear idea of the subject matter when talking about philosophy. This is due to a misunderstanding of the nature and function of philosophy. From its very nature it is clear that there must be differences of opinion about what the highest knowledge is. If I ask you, 'Who is the best man in your country?' you will reply, 'Well, that depends on your point of view.'

There is one man who is physically the strongest, another who is intellectually the cleverest, and a third who is morally the best, and so on. It is exactly the same with philosophy. Only its difficulty is infinitely greater. Is it then to be wondered at that philosophy has not been able to come to any universally acknowledged results? From the very nature of the thing, any unanimity about results or conclusions is impossible.

## Quest and Value—Its Two Aspects

On two points, however, there is more or less agreement among philosophers. The first is that philosophy is more a quest than an achievement. If genius is 99% perspiration and 1% inspiration, philosophy is 99% quest and 1% attainment. This is also in keeping with the Greek etymology of the word. Philosophy is love of knowledge and not the attainment of it. I do not mean to say that philosophy does not care for achievement. I would indeed be quite false to the history of philosophy if I were to make such an assertion. What I mean to say is that that which keeps the fire of philosophy burning and is its distinguishing feature is a quest, which we may call a quest eternal.

The second point on which all philosophers are agreed is that this quest is for a knowledge different from what we call sensuous knowledge or, as it is sometimes called, factual knowledge. This is expressed differently by different philosophers. For instance, it is said that philosophy seeks the real behind the appearances; or that it seeks the meaning of the facts; or that it seeks the value behind the reality. Now in whatever way you express it, it points to the fact that philosophy is not content with what appears on the surface but

wants to peep behind the facts into their meaning or value.

When I say that philosophy peeps behind the facts into their meaning or value, I do not mean that the inquiry into the meaning of things is the monopoly of philosophy, but that it does it more thoroughly and systematically than any other discipline. The mechanic may show the meaning of each of the parts of a machine, but it is the philosopher who asks, What is the meaning of the machine? The biologist may explain the meaning of every function and organ of life but leaves it to the philosopher to ask, What is the meaning of life?

Most of us, I believe, remember the beautiful lines of Bhartṛhari (*Vairāgyaśatakam*, 67):

*Prāptāḥ śriyaḥ sakalakāmadughāstataḥ kiṁ  
nyastam padam śirasi vidviṣatām tataḥ kim;  
Sampādītāḥ prañayino vibhavaistataḥ kiṁ  
kalpāsthītāstanubhṛtām tanavastataḥ kim.*

What if you succeed in having all your desires fulfilled, what if you can put your feet upon the heads of your enemies, what if you succeed in obtaining with the help of your wealth a large number of friends, what if you can preserve the bodies of mortals for a *kalpa*?

What if we succeed in doing all this? We shall still be pursued by the question '*tataḥ kim*, so what?'. As human beings we can never rest until we attain the ultimate value.

### Values—Individual and Universal Aspects

This brings us to the question, What is the meaning of value? When we look at the world, we find that it presents itself to us in two ways: In the first place, it manifests itself as something independent, as a self-contained exis-

tence. The sun, the moon, the stars, the various plants and animals constitute a gigantic world independent of myself. Compared with this gigantic world, I am only an insignificant dot. I can only gaze at it. I have no control over it; it is in no way dependent upon me; I am only a spectator, a mere witness of its incessant changes.

When I look at the world in this way, it appears to be nothing but a gigantic 'is'. Its neutrality is so clearly manifest that it is impossible to look at it in any other way.

But this same universe presents itself to me in another aspect. It is intimately connected with my joys and sorrows, my struggles and disappointments, my good and evil. It makes me sometimes laugh and sometimes weep. I feel sometimes attracted to it, and sometimes find it repellent. Sometimes it appears to me beautiful, sometimes ugly. In other words, it kindles different feelings in me. It is intimately related to my personality. It is then that I see *value* in it.

From the point of view of existence, everything exists. There is nothing which does not exist. Tables, chairs, trees, houses—all exist. Even the centaur and dragon exist. If you ask, how does the centaur exist, I will reply it undoubtedly exists. It exists in the world of imagination, in the pages of mythology, in the books for children. But from the point of view of value, a centaur or a dragon has no value. To mistake a rope for a snake is a mistake not from the point of view of existence, but from the point of view of value. The man who mistakes a rope for a snake sees something. It cannot be said that he sees nothing. What is false is not the seeing, but the *estimation* of that which is seen. Neither the rope nor the snake is false; what is false is the *ascription of the value* of a snake to the rope.

From this it follows that in the world of existence, there is neither truth nor falsity. Truth and falsity exist only in the realm of values. The false pearl is false only when the question of its value is raised. To the child who

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Truth and falsity exist only in the realm of values. ... To the child who is not interested in the question of value, there is no difference between the true pearl and the false.

is not interested in the question of value, there is no difference between the true pearl and the false.

What, now, is the nature of value? I have already said that value is intimately connected with my inner world. It is not like a tree or a house or a cow—something apart from me. On the contrary, it is something which is related to my personality.

But if a value merely indicated my subjective attitude, it could never become a value. So long as it is confined within the four walls of my individual self, it does not rise to the status of a value. It must possess a universality which would lift it from the position of a subjective to that of an objective value. When I call a rose beautiful, my object is not to say that it is beautiful for me alone. If what I call a value is not a value to others, then it is not a value at all. Consequently, universality is a necessary characteristic of all values.

Indeed, the peculiarity of a value is that it is at once individual and universal. Just as, on the one hand, it tells me about my own world, even so, it tells me of the world of others, of the common world. This need not cause any surprise. The distinction between my world and that of others is an artificial one. What makes my world special that it can never be anybody else's is something about which we can say nothing; it is absolutely inexpressible.

In fact, it is only feeling which can be said to be completely individual. Still, feeling is something which can be understood by others. Suppose you strike me a hard blow and I cry out in pain. Although it is individual, my pain has still a universal element in it, for others can easily understand it.

### The Task of Philosophy

We thus see that value is not individual but universal, although it is intimately related to our personality. This relation to personality distinguishes it from existence. When a thing merely *is*, my attitude towards it is that of a spectator. But when it is related to my person-

ality, it is no longer a mere existence but has already become a value.

The task of philosophy may be briefly stated to be *conversion of existence into value*. But existence itself must be called a value. It also enters into relationship with our personality, and therefore, is a value.

Moreover, to admit two independent worlds, a world of existence and a world of value, is to create a hopeless dualism. If a value has no standing in the world of existence, it cannot then become a value.

In fact, a value is a citizen of two kingdoms. On the one hand, it is a citizen of the world of values, and on the other, it has citizenship rights in the world of existence. The example of mistaking a rope for a snake will illustrate this. When a man mistakes a rope for a snake, he has a real perception. But this perception has place only in one kingdom, namely, the kingdom of existence. It has no place in the kingdom of values. It is a citizen of one kingdom and not of both, and that is why we call it an illusion.

Philosophy seeks in all existence a value, or in other words, it converts all existence into an existence *plus* a value.

### Science and Philosophy

Herein lies the main difference between philosophy and science. Science tries to keep as much as possible to existence. It tries to

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Very often where the scientist stops, the philosopher begins his work. It is the same ideal of truth which inspires both of them, but the scientist, on account of certain inherited conditions, does not want to proceed beyond a certain point, whereas the philosopher carries on the inquiry further and further.



keep personality as much as possible in the background. It attempts to adopt what it proudly calls 'the disinterested view of things'. Truth, truth and nothing but truth, is its motto.

It is no doubt a very laudable aim to prevent one's likes and dislikes, one's personal factor, from warping one's judgement. To do it successfully presupposes no small amount of training and no small tuning of one's life to a high ideal.

But the scientist is mistaken if he thinks that he simply sticks to the facts and has left all values behind. For what is truth but a value? It is in fact a fundamental value, for it offers us one of the deepest satisfactions of our personality. It is one of those great values at the altar of which man has in all ages been prepared to sacrifice all his dear possessions, even life itself. It is the call of truth that took Shakyamuni away from his dear wife, child and his rich inheritance to wander from place to place in search of it. It is again its voice which led innumerable saints and philosophers in the Middle Ages in Europe to face death cheerfully at the stake.

In the light of the value of truth, the scientist does not hesitate to throw sensation and perception overboard. The unsophisticated man sees the sun rise or set, but the scientist corrects this sense-impression in the light of the value of truth and does not hesitate to pronounce it an illusion. The child moving in a train believes that the trees and other objects fleet rapidly past him, but the scientist in the

interests of truth rejects this sense impression as worthless.

In each of these cases, therefore, the scientist, like the philosopher, converts the existent into a value. But the philosopher wants to carry this work much further. Very often where the scientist stops, the philosopher begins his work. It is the same ideal of truth which inspires both of them, but the scientist, on account of certain inherited conditions, does not want to proceed beyond a certain point, whereas the philosopher carries on the inquiry further and further.

Another difference between the scientist and the philosopher is that while the former is interested in only one value, namely, truth, the philosopher has to keep in mind always all the different values and give a relative estimate of them. Thus if there is a clash between the truth-value and the moral-value, the philosopher has to take note of it and form his estimate of the total value accordingly.

It is an eternal dissatisfaction, a kind of divine discontent, which impels a philosopher to push his boundaries in this way further and further. There are some beautiful lines of a German poet (Kastner) which state that of all men the philosophers are the most difficult to please. For this reason, in the Middle Ages, in the days of Church rule, they had to pay very dearly, sometimes even with their lives. From their very nature philosophers can never have any respect for authority, and for this reason have often been treated as a nuisance, and banished from many a republic.

And yet there was a time when philosophy was regarded as the queen of all sciences. In our country *adhyātma vidyā* was regarded as the supreme science. '*Adyātmavidyā vidyānām vādaḥ pravadatāmaham*, I am the spiritual science among all sciences', according to the *Bhagavadgītā* (10.32). In ancient Greece also philosophy held a supreme place. Plato called the philosopher the spectator of all time and existence, and looked upon him alone as competent to be the ruler of a state.

The dark side of science is being increasingly realized now. The knowledge which science has placed at the disposal of man is being increasingly utilized to fabricate weapons of mass destruction.

## The Decline of Philosophy

Two main causes contributed to philosophy's present fallen condition, as compared with its past glory. In Europe, in the Middle Ages, due to the ascendancy of the Church, philosophy became suspect. Authority and not reason held sway. Later, a characteristic philosophy was evolved which tried to reconcile reason with the doctrines of the Church. But in this only the Church doctrines were paramount, and philosophy was assigned only a subordinate role.

Philosophy came into her own during the Renaissance. Science also joined hands with her and together they marched joyfully for two centuries. Then this partnership of two centuries was broken, and philosophy and science chose different paths. This was the beginning of philosophy's misfortune. Science followed a different path and achieved astounding success. Philosophy, never caring to produce results which might captivate people's imagination, could not achieve such spectacular success.

This phenomenal success of science is the second cause of the gradual decline of philosophy in popular favour. But if we analyse this phenomenal success, we find that it is due not so much to the progress of science *qua* science, as to the ease with which the results of science could be applied to practical life. The ordinary man is not much interested in theoretical science. He takes far less interest in the abstract mathematical formulae than in philosophical questions on the nature of the soul, or freedom. It is not true, however, that philosophy as such is less interesting than science. It is rather the belief that somehow the most repelling mathematical formulae are connected with the revolutionary changes brought about by the modern machine age, that gives science its absolutely unique position.

## The Hold of Science on Human Mind

Hitherto things have all moved in a way favourable to science. The progress of theoret-

ical science has moved hand in hand with the development of machinery. The theoretical results of science have always been quickly converted into practical use, so that there has been established an almost cinema-like continuity between theoretical science and its various applications to practical life. It is this unflinching and rapid conversion of theoretical development into practical utility that has given science her present enormous hold upon the popular mind.

It is this hold again that is responsible for the comparative neglect philosophy presently suffers from. The hold of science is based on the popular belief that every development of science directly leads to the comfort and well-being of human beings. Somehow the idea has become deep-rooted in people's minds that science is practical and philosophy impractical. But this is due to a totally wrong conception of what is meant by 'practical'. In reality, philosophy is much more practical than science, for it deals with much deeper interests of mankind. It is moreover not true that the development has throughout been in the practical interests of mankind. It has led to rapid mechanization of humanity which has brought in its train a number of evils. The present industrial civilization which is the direct product of the growth of science, has to a great extent dehumanized humanity. It has led to an enormous growth of the spirit of competition not only among individuals but also among nations, and this is one of the most potent causes of war.

The dark side of science is being increasingly realized now. The knowledge which sci-

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If the values which philosophy regards as the highest are also those which religion is most anxious to conserve, there will be perfect harmony between philosophy and religion.

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ence has placed at the disposal of man is being increasingly utilized to fabricate weapons of mass destruction. Bombs, poison gases, tanks, submarines, long-range guns, to mention only a few of the weapons of destruction that science has enabled mankind to fabricate, are vivid reminders of the evil which scientific knowledge can produce in the hands of unscrupulous men. Indeed, the rapidity with which new weapons of destruction are being manufactured now will soon bring about a situation when in the interests of humanity, mankind will have to call a halt to the progress of science. I do not mean to suggest that science is in any way to blame for this. But if you give science undue credit for translating its results into practical life, you must also take into account the baneful effects of such translation.

I have no patience with those who say, 'What is the need of philosophy?' I would ask them, 'Are you content with the world as it is today? Are you satisfied with the present intrigues, plots and conflicts between individual and individual and nation and nation? Do you think it is enough that man should have the power to invent machinery that may be used as much for the destruction of mankind as for its preservation?' If your answer is yes, then I will say that the lady who exclaimed '*Yenāham nāmṛtā syām kimaham tena kuryām*, What shall I do with that which will not make me immortal?' (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 4.5.4), knew more of the values of life than you do.

### Philosophy and Religion

I have not yet said anything about the relation of philosophy to religion. Philosophy is the theoretical study of values, while religion is interested in the conservation of values. If the values which philosophy regards as the highest are also those which religion is most anxious to conserve, there will be perfect harmony between philosophy and religion. This was the case in our country in ancient times. The values discovered by philosophy, religion sought to conserve. Philosophy and religion,

therefore, always marched hand in hand. In Europe, unfortunately, a different state of things prevailed. There the values which religion has most tried to maintain are in conflict with those which philosophy has regarded as the highest. On the one hand, the values which religion has tried most to conserve, such as authority, have very often been those to which philosophy has attached very little importance. On the other hand, the values which philosophy has regarded as the highest, such as the freedom of human reason, have been treated with contempt by religion.

### Conclusion

There is no reason, however, why this state of things which prevailed in Europe in the past, should always continue. Now that the world is witnessing a rapid disappearance of religious bigotry everywhere, we may very well hope that religion will adopt a saner view and will not refuse to be guided by philosophy.

Whether this consummation will take place or not, there is no doubt that philosophy is not likely to perish. Philosophy satisfies a fundamental need of mankind, and therefore, it can never die. Of course, its form may vary, and ought to vary, with changing conditions. As Fichte said, the kind of philosophy a man has depends upon the sort of man he is. Every age has its philosophy, just as every age has its traditions and customs. The modern philosopher's task is not the same as the ancient philosopher's, for the needs of modern times are much more complex than those of ancient times.

If any age stands in need of philosophy more than any other, it is ours. For what we see today is a world which is entirely out of joint. Everywhere we see the clash of opposing ideas and ideals. In this conflict of warring ideas and ideals, what we require is a rethinking of values in their entirety, which philosophy alone can help us undertake. \*

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# Consciousness is Supreme

SWAMI PRABUDDHANANDA

Some philosophers and mystics say that the world is beginningless. But how about consciousness? When did *that* begin? Consciousness is so vast, so deep. It is difficult to posit any kind of beginning, middle and end for consciousness.

## Pursuit of Truth

We human beings have a deep yearning for knowledge. We are curious about everything. How does this happen? All of us—scientists, philosophers, mystics—have this common pursuit, the pursuit of knowledge, truth. We want to know what everything is about, what is real, what is true and what is fake. It is one of our irrepressible basic urges: to know what is true. Different people pursue truth in different ways.

Great thinkers and mystics of Vedantic tradition speak of different grades of reality or truth. They begin with what is called ‘fancy’. I will give you an example. Suppose there is a hare sitting before me with its two ears up. And I go on imagining they are the horns of the hare. Even if I imagine for a million years, they will not become horns. They remain what they are—ears. We go about things like that in our life. That is one level, fancying something that does not exist. Obviously, ‘fancy’ is not considered among grades of reality.

## Three Grades of Reality

The first grade of reality is illusory or dreamlike reality, such as dreams or hallucinations. They are very real for the experimenter. The dreamer

does not doubt the dream while experiencing it, but for others it does not have any meaning. But when the dreamer wakes up, the dream vanishes, making his experience very momentary and private. And his waking state contradicts his dream state. This is a common experience. Great thinkers do not say, ‘It is after all a dream. Forget it.’ They give value to this. It is one’s private experience, but true anyway at the individual level, though for the time being. That is one grade of truth.

The second grade of reality is the most important for all of us. It is what we call empirical, relative or pragmatic reality—relative to the person, place and time, but it does not have a lasting value. There is continuous movement and change. That is what we see in the relative world: everything depends on something else, and keeps changing all the time. This moment it is there, the next it is gone—something else has taken its place. Let us try to understand this with the example of a river. What is a river? A body of water. This body of water has only a momentary existence. The next moment it is gone and another body of water has taken its place. All the time the river is in a state of flux.

Now let us consider this meeting. I was sitting among the audience. But now I am standing before you, speaking. After my time

is up, I will go back and sit down again. This is another kind of reality. This is pragmatic reality, which is under the jurisdiction of time, space and causation.

Present-day science deals with this grade of reality, which

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According to Vedanta, the ultimate Truth needs to satisfy three conditions: It must be free from all contradictions; it should be universal, not limited by time, space or causation; and it should be self-evident.

we call the phenomenal world. This is very important as far as Vedanta is concerned. Science, with all its theories and experiments, and even philosophy, come under this category, characterized by a state of continuous flux. In Vedanta, the Sanskrit word for the universe is *jagat*, which literally means something which is in a state of flux. And science and formal religions deal with just this flux. Nothing more.

There is another grade of reality, called the ultimate reality. It is unchangeable, unlimited by time, space and causation. It is the basis of everything. In relation to the individual, it is the essence, the centre of one's being. It is existence itself. It is pure being. It cannot be known by the senses or by the mind. It is directly and immediately experienced, without the instrumentality of the senses and the mind, and does not depend for its proof upon any external authority. This truth can be realized or intuitively experienced as one's own existence, one's own consciousness. That is our definition of consciousness. It is not thought of or comprehended in any other way. Just as one cannot climb onto one's own shoulders, one cannot know one's own existence. How can I know me? I cannot make myself an object. I am the eternal subject. That is consciousness. *I am. Just I am.*

### The Three Tests of Truth

According to Vedanta, the ultimate Truth needs to satisfy three conditions: It must be free from all contradictions; it should be universal, not limited by time, space or causation; and it should be self-evident. It must shine by its own light—self-luminous, self-contained, self-existent, not dependent

upon anything external to itself.

Let us apply this test to these three grades of truth we have just seen. The illusory, dreamlike, hallucinatory reality falls. When I wake up, it is not there. And how about our empirical reality? That also falls. We may have a sense of reality here, but is it beyond time? No. I was sitting quietly, now I am speaking. So every moment I am changing. I contradict myself. So this grade of truth cannot stand the test.

Only consciousness stands all the tests. Consciousness is universal. Consciousness is self-evident. And consciousness is free from all contradictions. Consciousness does not quarrel with anything. Anything else does not quarrel with consciousness, because consciousness is one's very existence. How can my existence contradict me, my talking, my sitting, my standing? My consciousness does not change, irrespective of changes in the body. That is our concept of consciousness.

The absolute Truth is not affected by time, space or causation. So, it is only ultimate Reality that can stand all these tests. Modern science cannot stand the test of truth by this standard. The physicist contradicts the biologist. The biologist contradicts someone else—each in his separate field, seeking his own truth. That is because they are dealing with relative truths, not the ultimate Reality, which alone stands the test of self-luminosity, of universality, of freedom from contradiction.

The physicist contradicts the biologist. The biologist contradicts someone else—each in his separate field, seeking his own truth. That is because they are dealing with relative truths, not the ultimate Reality, which alone stands the test of self-luminosity, of universality, of freedom from contradiction.

### Consciousness Appears as the World

And now the important and most difficult question in all this is, how do you connect this empirical reality to the ultimate Reality? Are they connected at all? If yes, how? Only mystics have found the



answer. And there are different ideas. I will mention only two schools of thought. One says the whole universe is only a projection of consciousness, which some call God. And there is also another view, that of dualism, which holds that all this is only an appearance. As if something is lying in the dark, and you think that it is a snake. But after examining it, you find it is only a rope. What has happened? The rope appeared to be a snake. It is a momentary change, but if you see through it, you will see that it is a rope. Like that, one can see all this relative reality as an appearance, a rope that is seen as a snake. Consciousness appears as this world. The rope as the substratum must be present; the rope must be there for one to mistake it for the snake. The rope does not contradict the snake. Similarly consciousness does not contradict anything in this world.

The nature of consciousness is love, bliss and beauty. So in Vedanta, the question 'Does God exist?' does not arise. What exists is God alone. And where does He or She exist? In and through everything, the very stuff of everything, the essence of everything, without which nothing can exist. So the entire manifest universe is all a play of consciousness.

There are two kinds of knowledge. One is that of pure consciousness. They call this supreme Knowledge. The other is empirical knowledge: that of science (physics, chemistry, mathematics, biology, theology, cosmology) and scriptures (the Bible, Koran, the

So in Vedanta, the question 'Does God exist?' does not arise. What exists is God alone. And where does He or She exist? In and through everything, the very stuff of everything, the essence of everything, without which nothing can exist. So the entire manifest universe is all a play of consciousness.

Tripitakas). And all this empirical knowledge is acquired through the mind.

### The Player and the Play

So let us sum up. What is the relationship between science and consciousness? We can say that consciousness is the player and science deals with

the play. Player and play. Which one do we want? We want both. Do they contradict each other? No. How can the player contradict the play? He is present in every particle, every cell. Consciousness is all-pervading. Without consciousness nothing can exist, nothing can happen.

Can there be consciousness without the play? Yes. Mystics have experienced a state in which there is no play, only consciousness. This is called the transcendental experience, where consciousness alone exists. This is the basis of our claim that everything comes from consciousness. As long as we are completely absorbed in the play, we are not aware of the player.

Can scientists know this consciousness? Everyone can. Detach yourself from the play and you will know the player. That is the practical side of it. It is detachment that is the basic requirement. That is the great teaching of Lord Krishna in the *Bhagavadgita*. It is the mind that creates disturbances. Still the mind, control it and see what is left. Experience is the proof of this truth. Consciousness cannot be proved scientifically. It is deep within one's heart—universal, uncontradicted and self-luminous.

Never forget these sayings of the Master: 'One matchstick can destroy one hundred years' darkness in a moment. One drop of God's grace removes ... ignorance ... accumulated through birth after birth.'

—Swami Turiyananda, *Spiritual Treasures*, p. 219

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# The *Bhagavadgita* Casts Its Spell on the West

SWAMI TATHAGATANANDA

The *Bhagavadgita* is universally known in India. It is reported to have been translated into 82 languages and it can safely be said that at least 65 or more of these are foreign languages. There is no missionary zeal behind such translations of the *Bhagavadgita*. These are prompted by the sheer love people have for the non-dogmatic philosophy of the *Gita* and the depiction in it of the entire human life—from its source to its culmination in emancipation. The eternal teachings of the *Bhagavadgita* appealed to Western scholars, who took a serious interest in disseminating the *Gita*'s non-dogmatic, scientific description of human life.

In 1945, *Bhagavadgita*'s translation by Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood was published as a Mentor Pocket Book. It can be safely guessed that more than a million copies of the book would have been sold by now. In his lengthy introduction to this rendition of the sacred scripture, Aldous Huxley very beautifully remarked: 'The *Gita* is one of the clearest and most comprehensive summaries of the Perennial Philosophy ever to have been made. Hence its enduring value, not only for Indians, but for all mankind. ... The *Bhagavadgita* is perhaps the most systematic spiritual statement of the Perennial Philosophy.'

It is reported that there are 6500 distinct languages and dialects around the world. The Bible Society, which was founded in England in 1816, has 146 branches throughout the world. The Society took a leading role in popularizing the Bible with Christian missionary zeal in different nations around the world. Recent statistics indicate that it has been able to publish the complete Bible in 392 languages. This may be compared to the manner and

practice in which the *Bhagavadgita* has been translated and disseminated. The history of its spell and its impact on the West begins with the father of indology, Sir William Jones, and his 'dream-child', the Asiatic Society.

## The Impact of the Asiatic Society and Charles Wilkins' *Bhagavat-Gita* on Europe

The Asiatic Society of Bengal was founded in Calcutta by Sir William Jones (1746-94) on 15 January 1784 and pioneered Indian research and scholarship in particular and Asian studies in general. It was an epoch-making event in the meeting of East and West, on both the intellectual and spiritual levels. The Society inspired Sanskrit studies in Europe, whose literature was permeated and enriched by Jones' numerous translations and the Society's journal, *Asiatic Researches*.

The greatest impact on Europe came through the *Bhagavadgita*. Sir Charles Wilkins (1750-1836) loved the *Bhagavadgita* wholeheartedly—he compared it to the *Gospel of St John* of the New Testament. Under the auspices of the Society, his *Bhagavat-Gita, or Dialogues of Krishna and Arjun*, the very first translation of the *Gita* into a European language,<sup>1</sup> was printed in London at the direction of the East India Company upon the special recommendation of Warren Hastings. Hastings had a fascination for the *Gita* and he pursued the Court of Directors of the East India Company until the directors agreed to publish the work at the company's expense. In the learned Preface Hastings wrote to Wilkins' work, he praised its literary merits and asserted that the study and true practice of the *Gita*'s teachings would lead humanity to peace and bliss. In *Indology and Its Eminent Western Savants*, Sengupta confirms Hastings' great esteem for

the *Bhagavadgita*:

Warren Hastings, while forwarding a copy of the *Bhagavadgita* [by Wilkins] to the chairman of the East India Company, stated in the course of an introduction that the work was 'a performance of great originality, of a sublimity of conception, reasoning and diction almost unequalled, and single exception among all the known religions of mankind of a theology accurately corresponding with that of the Christian dispensation and most powerfully illustrating its fundamental doctrines.'<sup>2</sup>

Well aware of the *Gita's* universal bearing, Hastings included a prophetic expression in his Preface: 'The writers of the Indian philosophies will survive when the British Dominion in India shall long have ceased to exist, and when the sources which it yielded of wealth and power are lost to remembrance.'

As one scholar has written, 'no text could, by its profound metaphysics and by the prestige of its poetic casting, more irresistibly shake the hold of the tradition of a superior race.'<sup>3</sup>

Wilkins also became Librarian of the East India Company's London library in 1799. The essence of Hindu thought, as elegantly and concisely put forth in the *Bhagavadgita*, was disseminated throughout all of Europe, thanks to Wilkins' translation. His *Gita* was later translated into all major languages and reached a universal audience.

### France Becomes a Centre for Indian Studies

In 1787, Abbū Parraud retranslated Wilkins' English version into French. Within a short span of time, other brilliant translations of Sanskrit books from the Asiatic Society of Bengal became well known in revolutionary France.

Beginning in 1800, France became a centre for Indian studies when the accumulated Indian manuscripts languishing in the *Bibliothèque Nationale* began to be prepared for inventory. In 1832, a French translation of the *Bhagavadgita* was made directly from the San-

skrit by Jean-Denis Lanjuinais and published posthumously. Lanjuinais had written of the 'great surprise' it was 'to find among these fragments of an extremely ancient epic poem from India ... a completely spiritual pantheism ... and ... the vision of all-in-God ...'<sup>4</sup> By the late 18th century, French writers acquired intimate knowledge of Indian literature. Sensing that India possessed a great richness of spiritual unity, Henri Früdūric Amiel, a contemporary of Victor Hugo, saw the need of 'Brahmanising souls' for the spiritual welfare of humanity.<sup>5</sup>

France played a unique role in the advancement of Indic studies in Germany when Paris became the 'capital of nascent indology'. Together with Wilkins, Jones and others, British Lieutenant Alexander Hamilton (an employee of the East India Company) was among the first twenty-four charter members of the Asiatic Society of Bengal<sup>6</sup> and played a very important role in the focus of Sanskrit studies in Germany.

### The *Bhagavadgita's* Central Role in Germany's Spiritual Life

The *Bhagavadgita* helped to shape the worldview of Germany. Through their love of ideas, German scholars like Friedrich von Schlegel and Baron Ferdinand Eckstein became Sanskrit scholars. Jacob Wilhelm Hauer (1881-1962), a modern German indologist, afforded the *Bhagavadgita* a pivotal role in the spiritual life of Germany. An official interpreter of faith in Germany, Hauer described the *Gita* as 'a work of imperishable significance' that offers 'not only profound insights that are valid for all times and for all religious life, but it contains as well the classical presentation of one of the most significant phases of Indo-German religious history. ... It shows us the way as regards the essential nature and basal characteristics of Indo-Germanic religion. Here Spirit is at work that belongs to our spirit.'<sup>7</sup> Hauer declared the central message of the *Gita*: 'We are not called to solve the mean-

ing of life but to find out the deed demanded of us and to work and so, by action, to master the riddle of life.<sup>8</sup>

The 'native land' of Indic studies may have been England, but Germany is the true cradle of the Indic renaissance. In Jena, Weimar and Heidelberg, then at Bonn, Berlin and Tübingen, oriental studies were established during the 1790s 'like a rapid-fire series of explosions.'<sup>9</sup> The many translations of Indian texts produced by the English in India were available to German philosophers when their interest in India's spiritual philosophy was awakened. Charles Wilkins' translation of the *Bhagavadgita* had become a favourite book among Westerners throughout Europe, and together with other translations, found its widest audience in Germany.

The brothers Friedrich von Schlegel (1772-1829) and August Wilhelm von Schlegel (1767-1845) used their own printing press in 1823 to publish August Wilhelm's Latin translation of the *Bhagavadgita* with the original Sanskrit text. European scholars commended it. This translation was to be an important resource for Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835) and, later, for George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831), both of whom gave it their undivided attention.

Wilhelm von Humboldt claimed that his familiarity with the *Oupnek'hat*, the *Manu Smṛti*, Burnouf's extracts from the *Padma Purana* and Colebrooke's essay, 'On the Religion and Philosophy of the Indians', enabled him to comprehend the philosophy of the *Bhagavadgita*.<sup>10</sup> He wrote that 'this episode of the *Mahabharata* is the most beautiful, nay, perhaps even the only true philosophical poem which we can find in all the literatures known to us'<sup>11</sup> and ranked the *Gita* above the works of Lucretius, Parmenides and Empedocles.<sup>12</sup> After looking into the *Gita*, he wrote to his friend, statesman Frederick von Gentz in 1827: 'I read the Indian poem for the first time when I was in my country estate in Silesia and, while doing so, I felt a sense of overwhelming grati-

tude to God for having let me live to be acquainted with this work. It must be the most profound and sublime thing to be found in the world.'<sup>13</sup>

Humboldt wanted to inform the world of the concept of God that he found and appreciated in the *Bhagavadgita*. With as much capacity to plumb the scripture's depths as could be cultivated at that time, he set himself to broadcasting its teachings with an open mind. His lecture on the *Bhagavadgita* at Berlin's Royal Academy of Sciences to Prussia's intellectual elite in 1825<sup>14</sup> stirs the reader's mind to this day. It was published in 1826. He appeared again at the Academy one year later, this time with his analysis of the *Gita*'s Advaitic structure founded on Sankhya philosophy, and summarized the *Gita*'s discourses and poetic value in great detail.<sup>15</sup>

The first Humboldt lecture on the *Bhagavadgita* caught the attention of George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. He published a review of it in 1827 that contributed a critical and appreciative analysis. Hegel felt Humboldt's lecture to be 'an essential enrichment of the knowledge of the Indian way of concepts of the highest spiritual interests'<sup>16</sup> and his penetrating review served to promote Humboldt's work.

Friedrich von Schlegel was the first German to study Sanskrit and Indian religion and philosophy in depth.<sup>17</sup> His interest in India was greatly influenced by the *Bhagavadgita*. Schlegel produced in 1808 his eminent pioneering work, *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier* (*On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians: A Contribution to the Foundation of Antiquity*). It was the primary publication of 19th century European indology in the German language, acknowledged for its scholarly translations of extracts from the Sanskrit texts of the *Bhagavadgita* and the *Ramayana*. His words in *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier* hailed the contribution of Vedanta, and were later brought to life by Max Müller in his lecture, 'Origin of the Vedanta':

It cannot be denied that the early Indians possessed a knowledge of the true God; all their writings are replete with sentiments and expressions, noble, clear, and severely grand; as deeply conceived and reverentially expressed as in any human language in which men have spoken of their God. ... The divine origin of man, as taught in Vedanta, is continually inculcated, to stimulate his efforts to return, to animate him in the struggle, and incite him to consider a reunion and reincorporating with Divinity as the one primary object of every action and reaction. Even the highest form of European philosophy, the idealism of reason as it is set forth by the Greek philosophers, seems, when compared to the bounteous light and force of oriental idealism, to be no more than a feeble Promethean spark within the full celestial splendour of the noonday sun, a thin flickering spark always on the point of burning out.<sup>18</sup>

August Wilhelm von Schlegel hoped to inspire a new ethics and was the first to publish standard text editions with penetrating commentaries and translations in classical Latin of the *Bhagavadgita*, the *Hitopadesha* and the *Ramayana*.<sup>19</sup> Between 1820 and 1830 he published *Indische Bibliothek*, a collection of Indian texts. He is considered the founder of Sanskrit philology in Germany. His unrestrained praise for the *Bhagavadgita* elicited this fervent remark: 'If the study of Sanskrit had brought nothing more than the satisfaction of being able to read this superb poem in the original, I would have been amply compensated for all my labours. It is a sublime reunion of poetic and philosophical genius.'<sup>20</sup>

In 1932 the German scholar and Protestant theologian Rudolf Otto (1869-1937) wrote a groundbreaking work on the subject of mysticism in comparative religion. Otto regarded the *Bhagavadgita* as an excellent example of *mysterium tremendum* and understood the significance of Vedanta for the West. Otto's premise was that within the vast diversity of mystical expression a 'deep-rooted kinship ... unquestionably exists between the souls of [the] oriental and [the] occidental.'<sup>21</sup>

### England's Appreciation of the *Bhagavadgita*—Sir Edwin Arnold's *Song Celestial*

England first brought India's spiritual treasures to the attention of Europeans in the 18th century with the founding of the *Asiatic Society*. Sir Wilkins' translation of the *Bhagavadgita* and his authoritative Sanskrit grammar (1787) became the basis for all later work. The destiny of India's radiantly pure sacred texts was to make the miracle of India real to the West.

In the 19th century, Sir Edwin Arnold (1832-1904) was mysteriously drawn to India's philosophy through his attraction for the English translations of Indian literature. In 1885, exactly a hundred years after Sir Wilkins' English translation of the *Bhagavadgita* was published, Sir Arnold's blank verse translation of the sacred scripture appeared as *The Song Celestial*. Sir Arnold published a portion of *The Song Celestial* in the *International Review* and dedicated it to the American people 'with all gratitude and attachment'.<sup>22</sup> It enjoyed wide circulation, and many scholars of the *Gita* acknowledged its influence on readers.

Mahatma Gandhi esteemed the *Song Celestial* as the best translation of his beloved *Gita* and laid bare that it inspired his lifelong devotion to its study in his search for truth. In *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* Gandhi revealed his thoughts on this matter:

Towards the end of my second year in England I came across two Theosophists, brothers, and both unmarried. They talked to me about the *Gita*. They were reading Sir Edwin Arnold's translation—*The Song Celestial*—and they invited me to read the original with them. I felt ashamed, as I had read the divine poem neither in Sanskrit nor in Gujarati. I was constrained to tell them that I had not read the *Gita*, but that I would gladly read it with them, and that though my knowledge of Sanskrit was meagre, still I hoped to be able to understand the original to the extent of telling where the translation failed to bring out the meaning. I began reading the *Gita* with them. The verses in the second



chapter,

*If one*

*Ponders on objects of the sense, there springs  
Attraction: from attraction grows desire,  
Desire flames to fierce passion, passion breeds  
Recklessness; then the memory—all betrayed—  
Lest noble purpose go, and saps the mind,  
Till purpose, mind, and man are all undone*  
made a deep impression on my mind, and they still ring in my ears. The book struck me as one of priceless worth. The impression has ever since been growing on me with the result that I regard it today as the book par excellence for the knowledge of Truth. It has afforded me invaluable help in my moments of gloom. I have read almost all the English translations of it, and I regard Sir Edwin Arnold's as the best. He has been faithful to the text, and yet it does not read like a translation. Though I read the *Gita* with these friends, I cannot pretend to have studied it then. It was only after some years that it became a book of daily reading.<sup>23</sup>

England's George Augustus Jacob (1840-1918) dedicated himself to making Hindu thought more accessible to Western minds. In 1857, at age seventeen, he travelled to India and did not return to England until 1890. In India he became proficient in Urdu, Marathi and Sanskrit and earned renown as a Sanskrit scholar. He compiled an alphabetical index of the main words of sixty-six principal *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavadgita* in his *Concordance to the Principal Upanishads and Bhagavadgita (Upanishad Vakyakosha)*. He published it in 1891, after eight laborious years of faithful study and wrote every syllable of Devanagari printed on its 1,083 pages.

Charles Johnston, a retired English civil servant in Bengal and Sanskrit scholar, brought forth a translation in 1908 in Flushing, New York, entitled *Bhagavadgita: The Songs of the Master*. Johnston paid tribute in his lengthy General Introduction to the historical and eternal significance of the scripture: 'The *Bhagavadgita* is one of the noblest scriptures of India, one of the deepest scriptures of the world. ... a symbolic scripture, with many meanings, containing many truths ... [that]

forms the living heart of the Eastern wisdom.'<sup>24</sup>

(to be concluded)

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### Every Duty is an Act of Worship

Must a man cling to his worldly duties even if they bring suffering and pain to himself and others? Does not duty often create friction and irritation? Is it not our true duty to cast off duties and follow the line of least resistance in a life of non-activity? This was Arjuna's dilemma; and this is the dilemma we often face in our everyday life. Arjuna's confusion was due to his attachment and egotism. And also he was frightened, to some extent, by the presence of the powerful combatants on the opposing side. Sri Krishna points out to Arjuna the imperative nature of duty and its usefulness as a spiritual discipline. But it is not the Stoic ideal of duty for duty's sake that Sri Krishna preaches, rather the spiritual ideal of duty for God's sake. Duty must be performed to please God alone; brooding over the result has nothing to do with the performance of duty. God is immanent in the universe. He is the indwelling Soul of all beings. Therefore the Upanishad says: 'The husband is dear to the wife, not for the sake of the husband, but for the sake of the Lord in the husband. The wife is dear to the husband, not for the sake of the wife, but for the sake of the Lord in the wife.' So every duty is an aspect of worship. Duty performed in this spirit confers joy upon the doer irrespective of success or failure. There is a joy in being made an instrument of God, there is a joy in being used by Him, and there is a joy in being set aside when the instrument has broken or has served its purpose.

—Swami Nikhilananda, *The Bhagavad Gita*, pp. 10-1

### The Greatness of the *Gita*

I am delighted to hear that you are studying the *Gita*. The *Gita* is the embodiment of all scriptures. It destroys man's rebirth in this mortal world. The *Gita* is the heart of the Lord. It has no parallel. A person who practises the teachings of the *Gita*, his mind becomes pure and he develops the power of right understanding in every subject. That person attains supreme peace.

—Swami Turiyananda, *Spiritual Treasures*, p. 217

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# Ethics and Development

DR D NESY

**T**he 1995 United Nations World Summit for Social Development at Copenhagen observed that 'the persistence of large-scale poverty, unemployment, and social exclusion despite rapid strides in economic progress are a reflection of the social and moral crisis that afflict the world community today.' It is evident that ethical questions are becoming more relevant today than ever before in wide-ranging areas such as technology, environment, human rights, medicine, rural development, unemployment, consumer protection and national integration. Development is no more equated with economic development. The frustrated vision and unfulfilled promises of technology, the concept of environment as being a common property, economic justice, the virtues of a shared community life grounded in the feminine values of love, cooperation and supportiveness—all this points to a new look at development in terms of a humanitarian type of ethics for the attainment of well-being for one and all.

## The Concept of Development Examined

The term 'development' is very comprehensive in its connotation. The traditional concept of development is different from that of modern times. Traditionally, development meant a 'top-down' technique where the entire development process was elite-centred, tuned to the benefit of the rich and the West-oriented. The result of this is summed up in the 1992 report of the UNDP, according to which 'in 1920, the richest 20% of the world's population had income 30 times greater than the poorest 20%. By 1990, the richest 20% were getting 60 times more.' The implications are obvious: the poor became poorer and the rich richer. Such growing dis-

parity was visible not only within countries, but also among countries. It became a world-wide phenomenon. The gap between the North and the South has assumed various dimensions of growth, literacy, life expectancy, environment degradation, violation of human rights, and so on. The reason is simple: the strategies of development so far implemented did not work well. People's involvement and participation in development schemes has been conveniently forgotten, and the benefits have never reached them. A majority of programmes were aimed at transforming the socio-economic lives of the people, but the latter were kept in the dark about them, with no knowledge of either formulating policies or implementing schemes. Development meant economic development, and that is only another name for the acquisition of wealth at the cost of the majority population.

Science and technology have immensely contributed to changes in almost every aspect of life. Improvements are seen in farming and manufacturing, in communication and transportation, in health and hygiene—to name a few. But there are also unhappy aspects of scientific achievements: the risk of nuclear war, the threat of pollution, the depletion of natural resources, to name a few. With the help of scientific knowledge and technological advancement, we have the power to affect the natural world. But instead of turning the dross into gold, we have learned to turn oceans into sewers, to live at the expense of our surroundings, neighbours and fellow men. In short, the development of science and its applications has created more problems than it has solved.

Faced with the consequences of such development efforts, people widely realize that development strategies mean something

more. Emphasis on quality over quantity is one important point. Investment must not simply ensure economic growth, but areas like health, education and improvement of the quality of life are to be included in the priority list. The need to pay special attention to that group of population which has been left behind in the process of development is being increasingly felt today—tribals, Harijans, women, and other weaker sections of society. The fact of empowering people, particularly women, requiring their full participation in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of decisions regarding the well-being of societies is strongly felt. In short, development means human development, improving the conditions of human life or, we may say, social development. A meaningful development programme should aim at meeting the basic needs of the human being first, so that a poverty-free society receives priority attention in the development process.

The second UNDP declaration takes into account these facts and says that 'development is a comprehensive economic, political, social and cultural process which aims at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and of all individuals on the basis of their active, free, and meaningful participation in development and in the fair distribution of benefits resulting therefrom.' What is aimed at is a 'bottom-top' type of development, which is people-centred, mass-oriented and participatory in character. A people-centred framework of social development built upon the culture of cooperation and partnership is to be developed.

Human development is a part of all developmental processes. This must be value-based. Values like human dignity, equality and social justice must be the backbone of any type of development. Due concern for the disadvantaged and vulnerable sections of society, consisting of women, children, prisoners of war, migrants and disabled persons promote greater harmony and tolerance in societ-

ies. The recognition of the dignity of human beings, giving all human beings equal status and making sure that justice is done to all, naturally leads to cooperation and never to competition. A greater emphasis must be laid on the well-being of the entire society and all its individuals.

Human development involves sustainable development, which is a subject of great contemporary concern. The talk about sustainability gains momentum in the context of ensuring a better future. Humans have by now the capacity to destroy or permanently defile the earth. They seem to be unmindful of their duty to protect and preserve the diverse life-support systems for their children. Studies show that sustainable development

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Human development is a part of all developmental processes. This must be value-based. Values like human dignity, equality and social justice must be the backbone of any type of development.

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requires both biological and social sustainability. To achieve a higher quality of life for all people for all time, the interdependence of the factors of economic development, social development and environmental protection must be accepted as the framework of action. These necessitate justice and compassion on the part of human beings towards one another and towards nature. Living in harmony with nature, caring for the ecosystem that sustains and nourishes, and the concern that the gratification of our present needs should not be at the cost of the welfare of our children in the future—these are the essential ingredients of biological sustainability. Social sustainability is even more difficult to attain in a cruel, totalitarian state, where social diversities on the ba-

sis of caste, class, religion, gender, race, language, and the like are fostered. Respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms is essential for peace and security, which in turn serve social development and social justice. It is necessary to have a deliberate policy of cross-cultural interaction and multicultural pluralism with the harmonious existence of different cultures in close proximity.

Human development implies an alternative development, perhaps in the form of an alternative lifestyle. It is high time we shed alien influences in medicine and food habits and followed the age-old indigenous systems of medicine and health foods which are gaining ground in other parts of the globe. The area of human rights is another concern. In a society where innocent human beings are

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Human beings cannot live by bread alone. We aspire for an orderly, harmonious and happy life—both individual and social.

Peace, freedom, stability and security are essential ingredients of human life.

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treated with zero dignity, human development cannot find fruition. Similar is the case with the entire range of feminist issues—organizing, educating, training, and mobilizing public opinion for the improvement of women and realizing their possibilities.

### **The Ethical Question**

Human beings cannot live by bread alone. We aspire for an orderly, harmonious and happy life—both individual and social. Peace, freedom, stability and security are essential ingredients of human life. It follows that a value-orientation, an orientation of objectives and priorities towards the well-being of all, is a basic need for social development. Values like justice, equality, fundamental free-

dom are accepted in all societies. The pursuit, protection and promotion of values promote concern for sustainable development. Scientific knowledge enriches man's life, makes it smooth and easy, free from cares, tensions and strife. It consists in progressive exploration and discoveries, which enhance material life.

At the height of material prosperity, some kind of stocktaking, a kind of assessment, assimilation or discrimination, becomes necessary. No science can provide us this. For example, atomic energy can be used for both good and bad purposes. It can save and enrich human life, and also destroy the entire human civilization. Science and technology are only tools or instruments used in realizing the ends of human life. And to this end, the basic concept of right and wrong, or good and bad, is very important. A sense of direction is required to guide and control the material achievements of the individual.

A human being, however rustic and barbarous he may be, does possess a sense of value. This may be the reason why most of us think in terms of maximum longevity for civilization and humanity and like to look forward to a world in which most people can be reasonably happy and can live securely and freely without pestilence, war and starvation. For this, it is necessary to have a proper understanding of the relationship between man and man, man and his natural environment, and man and his technology. Now the question is, is it possible for human beings to strike a balance between the existing values like freedom, love and justice, and the blessings of an industrial-cum-technological civilization contributing to a rich and full life for the human being? Is it the case that human values are incompatible with the industrial civilization? Great intelligence, vision and courage are required to find an answer to this problem since the future of humanity depends on it.

The individual cannot live without making choices. We are not machines created by the genes, or mere helpless creatures on earth.



As Anthony Flew puts it: 'The crux is that man is the creature which can and cannot but make choices and that it is upon the senses of these choices that the future not only of mankind but also of almost all other species now depend largely.' It is apparent that in our day-to-day existence in society, and in our inter-communal and even international transactions, a deliberate choice be made in favour of dharma that respects the dignity of others as much as it respects our own. Today, the human being is living both an individual and a social life. Science and technology have made us inhabitants of a 'global village'. In place of the old world, divided miserably due to lack of communication and traffic, today's world is united physically due to scientific achievements. This can prove itself to be good or bad. The prospect of a good future depends largely on the availability of physical comforts, vis-a-vis rational development. The present situation of rational progress lagging behind the physical, points to an unhappy future. The solution lies in living a life of wisdom, a life of harmony and balance with our own being as well as with other human beings and also the entire cosmos.

### The Dharma Concept

Dharma takes its meaning from the Vedic *ṛta*. To the ancient saints, *ṛta* is that which governs and controls the universe including its mechanical regularity. Things do not fall apart in the physical world because they are held together by the order of *ṛta*. Man is considered part and parcel of the universal cosmic network, and being a psycho-physical organism, he is also controlled and sustained by the same principle. Thus the human being's world, including his relation to other individuals, other groups and states is controlled and governed by the universal order. Dharma took the place of *ṛta* and included all the activity that a man is required to perform under the fixed order of things if he has to live fittingly. That activity which conforms to the norm of

the universe is good. Any activity contrary to the established order is termed *adharma*, the exact opposite of dharma. It is sheer lawlessness.

Dharma is related to *śāśāra*. It sets the standard of action in this world. It enjoins human beings to observe certain injunctions and prohibitions, all aimed at upholding the given order of things. It is taken as an instrument of worldly progress, *abhyudaya sādhanā*. Hence the Vaiśeṣika defines it thus: 'Dharma is knowledge prominently directed to the achievement of desired happiness here and hereafter by means of appropriate actions.' Dharma, according to our scriptures, is that which protects all, preserves all. Dharma is

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that principle which is capable of preserving the world. Thus dharma has a special status in the Indian context. It is held to be the individual and social conscience-keeper for the right functioning of the inner and outer person, the individual and the group. This justifies the acceptance of dharma as the first *puruṣārtha*, or supreme end of life, the others being *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*.

The *Manu Smṛiti* speaks of the tenfold law of dharma and enjoins its strict observance. Accordingly, it is taken to mean what is conducive to the welfare of all beings. According to Dr Radhakrishnan the concept of dharma includes all forms of activity which shape and sustain human life. In short, dharma is any ac-

tivity of the person as a biological, social, political, economic and spiritual being, directed towards personal as well as social betterment.

### Justice

The fact that people are crying not for food alone, but they need and demand freedom, dignity, justice, and participation as well, brings to light the significance of justice in the process of development. Justice should be the focus of any developmental process because it arises out of the social milieu. Talking about justice as retribution, as a punishment given for some wrongdoing, is only a narrow view of justice. In a wider sense, justice deals with distribution. It refers to the fairness with which a community distributes benefits and burdens among its members. Questions and issues arise on how things should be allocated, as for example, distribution of wealth and goods, privileges and power, education and medical care. This leads to the assumption of a standard of distribution, a principle of distributive justice.

Plato and Aristotle, representing the classical Greek view of justice, associate justice with merit or demerit. When there isn't enough for all, the available resources must be distributed on the basis of talent and ability. Justice as giving individuals their due naturally rests upon inequality and class distinctions, which cannot be fostered in an egalitarian society, where all human beings are equal. Here the social utility theory of justice is founded on the assumption that everyone is equal. Since 'every one is created equal' everyone is entitled to the same kind of education, equal treatment before law, equal medical care, and so on. This creates operational and theoretical problems in particular when demand exceeds supply. Rights and interests of individuals and the common good as envisaged by the utility theory often cannot go together. John Rawls, in his formulation of justice, associates justice with equality. What is meant is that justice attempts to reassert the

primacy of individual rights by placing emphasis on the least advantaged members of society. He says: 'All social values—liberty and opportunity, income and wealth, and the bases of self-respect—are to be distributed equally unless an unequal distribution of any or all of these values is to everyone's advantage.' If it is to the advantage of everyone, even unequal distribution is welcome. Hence he justifies inequalities if it is to the advantage of the least privileged. Rawls continues: 'Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged!' According to him, the social and economic arenas must allow for some inequality only if the plight of the disadvantaged is relieved through welfare programmes and the like.

The problem of justice poses serious challenges to social and political philosophers. There is no single theory of justice that receives universal endorsement. At the same time, Rawls' thought is significant in that it connects justice with aiding the least advantaged. There is a growing recognition of the idea that public policy should take a child-centred approach.

### Eco-feminine Approach

The present global situation of development has created new, till-now-unanswered challenges to moral responsibilities, and the distant consequences of human actions. The new social subsystems of global economy have resulted in a new relationship between man and the exosphere. The novelty of this relationship lies in the recognition that nature is no longer undamageable and inexhaustible. The use of technological skills to increase and expand the effects of human actions has finally compelled us to a sense of responsibility for letting out industrial wastes into the air and water, for the preservation of forests on a global scale and for the very climate and atmosphere of the entire planet.

No wonder Karen Warren speaks of

eco-feminism, which comprises the following elements: (1) there are important connections between oppression of women and oppression of nature; (2) feminist theory and practice must include an ecological perspective; (3) solutions to ecological problems must include a feminist perspective.

The concept of feminist ethics is peculiar in its import. It places emphasis on relationships and networks rather than on rights and justice. It is an ethics of care and concern, more flexible to deal with the individual and not with generalizations. 'Ethics of nurture', as it is often called, maintains that relationships and the care and responsibility that they entail are the dominant values. The so-far neglected feminine virtues like love, compassion, cooperation and supportiveness need to be projected more than masculine virtues like power, competition and control.

### The Gandhian Scheme

In the Gandhian scheme of economics, there is a close relationship between employment and development. Gandhiji was against the Western model of urban-dominated industrialization. The reason was that in a vast country like India, with a teeming population and an ancient rural tradition, the problem is how to utilize the idle hours of the millions so that a solution could be provided to the problem of poverty and growing unemployment. According to him, the solution lies in industrializing the village by improving agricultural facilities, tapping the sources of alternative energy, improving housing facilities and strengthening the small-scale sector. E F Schumacher draws the distinction between the two:

The technology of mass-production is inherently violent, ecologically damaging, self-defeating, in terms of non-renewable resources, and stultifying for the human person. ... The technology of production by the masses, making use of the best of the modern knowledge and experience is conducive to decentralization, compatible with the laws of ecology, gen-

tle in its use of scarce resources and designed to serve the human person instead of making him the servant of machine.

The fundamental principles of Gandhian economics rest upon ethical principles such as non-violence, non-exploitation, non-possession, bread labour, trusteeship and *swadeshi*. Non-violence implies not only the elimination of war but also the establishment of peace. Gandhian non-violence is both positive and negative, both internal and external. Negatively, it stands for abstaining from harming others, and positively, it implies overflowing love for all, a love that protects and cares for the entire creation.

Non-stealing and non-possession are essential virtues. To quote Gandhi:

We are thieves in any way. If I take anything

Negatively, it [Gandhian non-violence] stands for abstaining from harming others, and positively, it implies overflowing love for all, a love that protects and cares for the entire creation.

that I do not need for my own immediate use and keep it, I thief it from somebody else. It is the fundamental law of nature without exception that nature produces enough for our wants from day to day; and if only everybody took enough for himself and nothing more, there could be no pauperism in this world, there would be no man dying of starvation. ... You and I have no right to anything that we really have until these many millions are clothed and fed. You and I ... must adjust our wants and even undergo voluntary privation, in order that they may be nursed, fed and clothed.

The virtue of self-control is essential for the progress of the individual and society in the real and right direction. Hence Gandhiji advocates limitation of wants. It is commonly held that *ahimsā* is meant for the weak and lim-

itation of wants for the poor. But Gandhiji meant that first the strong and the rich were supposed to practise *ahimsā* and limitation of wants, and practise the art of living nobly.

Bread labour stands for the means by which a non-violent economic order can be brought into existence. A man must earn his bread by labouring with his own hands. It is the bounden duty of one and all to put forth manual work for earning livelihood. 'The need of the body must be supplied by the body. ... Mere mental—intellectual—labour is for the soul. It is its own satisfaction.' The doctrine of *swadeshi* carries with it not only economic import but a spiritual and moral import as well. Economically it aimed at devising the best practical means of alleviating the

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Development ... includes many more areas, built upon the strong foundation of the ethical values of equality, justice, cooperation, love and brotherhood, a more comprehensive understanding of human nature and fulfilment.

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wretchedness and misery, the chronic starvation and slow death of the ordinary Indian masses. Morally it stands for restraint and not for licence. Gandhiji says: 'Civilization, in the real sense of the term, consists not in the multiplication but in the deliberate and voluntary reduction of wants. This alone promotes real happiness and contentment and increases the capacity for service.' That is the economics of austerity.

Finally, the *sarvodaya* principle. It means the uplift of all, even unto the last. *Sarvodaya* stands for equal rights and opportunities for all. That is the reason why Gandhiji redefined

the concept of standard of living. According To him,

those who have not enough to eat should have plenty of fresh, wholesome, balanced diet; those who are naked should have simple but artistic and durable clothes; those who are living in ill-lighted, ill-ventilated slums or have no shelters should have sunny, airy and cozy dwellings amid agreeable surroundings to live in. We must learn to respect and not despise the primitive style of living practices like consuming home-grown, garden-fresh vegetables and fruit; people staying in healthy, natural surroundings so that they sing and play out of exuberance of the joy of living.

Further, we find the Gandhian scheme encompassing areas which are central for development such as the problems of women and weaker sections of society, the much-talked-about problem of human rights, environmental protection, education and, above all, a human-centred approach to problems.

### Conclusion

It follows from the above considerations that the erstwhile economic criterion of development, emphasizing general human upliftment but coexisting with glaring inequities, compel a reconsideration. Development means not simply the provision of infrastructure and industrial environment for the economic betterment of any one section of humanity. It includes many more areas, built upon the strong foundation of the ethical values of equality, justice, cooperation, love and brotherhood, a more comprehensive understanding of human nature and fulfilment. There should not be any element of selfishness or greed. The long-cherished goal of humankind is peace, love and brotherhood—a way to live together, considering the good of all, loving one's neighbour as oneself, so that we can realize the whole world as one family. \*

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# Avadhūta Upaniṣad

TRANSLATED BY SWAMI ATMAPRIYANANDA

## The obligation to study etc (continued)

देवार्चनस्नानशौचभिक्षादौ वर्ततां वपुः ।

तारं जपतु वाक्तद्वत्पठत्वाम्नायमस्तकम् ॥२७॥

27. Let the body be engaged in the worship of gods, in bathing, maintaining [external] cleanliness, begging for alms, etc; similarly, let speech repeat the *tāra* mantra (the mystic syllable *om*) or the Upaniṣadic passages.

विष्णुं ध्यायतु धीर्यद्वा ब्रह्मानन्दे विलीयताम् ।

साक्ष्यहं किञ्चिदप्यत्र न कुर्वे नापि कारये ॥२८॥

28. Let the *buddhi* (intelligence) contemplate on Viṣṇu [the Supreme Lord], or let it get absorbed (merged) in the bliss of Brahman. [Let my body, speech and intelligence be thus engaged in their functions in whatever way.] I am the [eternal] witness. I neither do anything here [in any of these functions] nor cause anything to be done.

कृतकृत्यतया तृप्तः प्राप्यप्राप्ततया पुनः ।

तृप्यन्नेवं स्वमनसा मन्यतेऽसौ निरन्तरम् ॥२९॥

29. [Thus], being contented with duties fulfilled, and again, satisfied with achievements that needed to be accomplished, he [the *avadhūta*] ceaselessly reflects in his own mind as follows.

घन्योऽहं घन्योऽहं नित्यं स्वात्मानमज्रसा वेद्मि ।

घन्योऽहं घन्योऽहं ब्रह्मानन्दो विभाति मे स्पष्टम् ॥३०॥

30. Blessed am I, blessed am I. I always experience my own Self [Atman] directly [immediately]. Blessed am I, blessed am I. For me, the bliss of Brahman shines clear and transparent.

घन्योऽहं घन्योऽहं दुःखं सांसारिकं न वीक्षेऽद्य ।

घन्योऽहं घन्योऽहं स्वस्याज्ञानं पलायितं क्वापि ॥३१॥

31. Blessed am I, blessed am I. I do not perceive now the misery of worldly existence. Blessed am I, blessed am I. Where indeed has my own ignorance fled away (vanished)?

घन्योऽहं घन्योऽहं कर्तव्यं मे न विद्यते किञ्चित् ।

घन्योऽहं घन्योऽहं प्राप्तव्यं सर्वमद्य संपन्नम् ॥३२॥

32. Blessed am I, blessed am I. I have no duty whatsoever. Blessed am I, blessed am I. I have accomplished here all that was to be attained.

घन्योऽहं घन्योऽहं तृप्तेर्मे कोपमा भवेल्लोके ।



धन्योऽहं धन्योऽहं धन्यो धन्यः पुनः पुनर्धन्यः ॥३३॥

33. Blessed am I, blessed am I. What comparison can there be for my [state of] contentment in this world? Blessed am I, blessed am I. Blessed, blessed, again and again, [may I repeat,] blessed [am I].

अहो पुण्यमहो पुण्यं फलितं फलितं दृढम् ।  
अस्य पुण्यस्य संपत्तेरहो वयमहो वयम् ॥३४॥

34. Lo [and behold]! [All my] accrued virtues have attained to their fruition; oh, [all my] accrued virtues have indeed attained their fruition, surely [they have]. Oh, we are what we are on account of the wealth of these accrued virtues.

अहो ज्ञानमहो ज्ञानमहो सुखमहो सुखम् ।  
अहो शास्त्रमहो शास्त्रमहो गुरुरहो गुरुः ॥३५॥

35. Wonderful [is my] Knowledge, [indeed] wonderful [is my] Knowledge; wondrous Joy, wondrous Joy. Wonderful [are the] scriptures, wonderful [indeed are the] scriptures. Wonderful the teacher, wonderful [indeed is the] teacher.

### Result of the Supreme Knowledge described above

विद्यापठनानुसन्धानफलम्

य इदमधीते सोऽपि कृतकृत्यो भवति । सुरापानात्पूतो भवति । स्वर्णस्तेयात्पूतो भवति । ब्रह्महत्यात्पूतो भवति । कृत्याकृत्यात्पूतो भवति । एवं विदित्वा स्वेच्छाचारपरो भूयात् । ओं सत्यम् । इत्युपनिषत् ॥३६॥

36. Whoever studies this [the truth about the *avadhūta*'s exalted state as described above] also attains [supreme] fulfilment. He becomes free from [any kind of] sins [that he may have committed, inadvertently or otherwise] like drinking liquor (alcoholic drink), stealing gold, killing a brahmin, and becomes purified [and sinless]. He becomes cleansed of (purified from) [virtues or sins accruing respectively from] actions which are enjoined or prohibited. Having attained this [supreme] Knowledge, let him [an *avadhūta*] wander about freely as he wills, unbridled [by the worldly code of conduct]. *Om*, [this is the highest] Truth [about an *avadhūta*, a man of supreme spiritual realization].

Thus [ends] the Upaniṣad.

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The Lord said in the *Gita*, as if He were swearing an oath: ‘Having come into this transitory, joyless world, worship Me. Fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, sacrifice to Me, bow down to Me. Having thus disciplined yourself, and regarding Me as the Supreme Goal, you will come to Me.’ In spite of this encouraging and positive message of the Lord, we still do not turn towards Him. What else can be more unfortunate and regrettable than this?

—Swami Turiyananda, *Spiritual Treasures*, p. 147

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## ❧ Glimpses of Holy Lives ❧

### From an Insignificant Error to a Significant Transformation!

**B**orn in Maharashtra around 1590, Eknath lost his parents soon after his birth. His grandfather brought him up. Extremely intelligent, Eknath was a lover of devotional practices and spiritual pursuit. Even as a small boy he mastered epic poems like the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, besides other Puranas. When he was just twelve years old he was infused with such longing for God that he began to look for a guru. He would spend the early hours of the day in a nearby Shiva temple singing the glories of God. One day he heard a heavenly voice: 'Go to Deogarh and meet Janardan Pant. He will bless you.' He took it as a divine command.

Without informing anyone, Eknath left for Deogarh on foot. He reached the place in two days. He was overwhelmed with joy and emotion on seeing Janardan Pant, and fell prostrate at his feet. It was a sacred occasion, the disciple meeting his teacher. From then on Eknath remained with his Guru for six long years and served him with his heart and soul.

Once Janardan Pant assigned some accounting work to Eknath. Very sincere in his work, once Eknath failed to account for a pice. He repeatedly tried to recollect where he had spent it, but in vain. He was concerned and his search for the missing pice took a desperate turn. That night, after finishing his *guruseva*,

Eknath busied himself with locating the error. For the first three quarters of the night he pored over the account books. At last, in the fourth quarter, he found it. Overpowered by joy and hilarity, he clapped his hands loudly. His guru woke up and asked Eknath the reason for his unusual hilarity. With all humility Eknath told him about the missing pice and his desperate search to locate the error in the account books. And, finally, he told him how he could detect the error, which explained his joyous mood.

Hearing this, Janardan Pant said: 'If the detection of an error worth a pice has given you so much joy, how much more happiness you would get by detecting the biggest error of your life! If you apply yourself to solving this greatest error with the tenacity you displayed to resolve the error worth a pice, you will realize God. Is He anywhere far away?' Eknath's moment had come. His eyes were opened. He fell at the feet of his guru, who had removed the veil covering his vision. Henceforth he set out to solving the mystery of life with all his heart and soul, and as a result, was very soon blessed with God-realization. He attained the goal of human life. An error worth a pice led Eknath to the resolution of the biggest error of life!

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### He Saw Virtue behind Guile

**G**adadhara Bhatta was a great Vaishnava saint of Vrindaban and ardent follower of Sri Jiva Goswami. He had a tender heart but also possessed a brilliant mind. His poetical compositions were imbued with deep meaning and sentiment, and he

used to sing them in his melodious voice. With his uncommon intelligence, he could expound the intricacies of the bhakti doctrine in such simple style that his discourses made an irresistible appeal on pundits and common people alike. Especially, they enjoyed Gada-

dhara Bhatta's exposition of the *Bhagavata*. Holy Vrindaban in those days, as it is even now, was the centre of Vaishnava religious life, where devotees and lovers of God flocked in great numbers. And during Gadadhara Bhatta's time all these pilgrims converged at the temple where he gave his *Bhagavata* discourses.

One day, the abbot of a nearby Vaishnava monastery came to hear Gadadhara's discourse. Gadadhara received him with great respect and honoured him with a special seat. A few minutes into the discourse, the abbot noticed tears of ecstasy rolling down every listener's face. It appeared as though they were all bathed in an indescribable bliss. Only he, though being the head of a Vaishnava community, did not feel any emotion. How shameful, he thought. When the abbot came to the discourse the next day, he was equipped with a clever little device: he had sprinkled some hot powdered pepper on his towel. Pretending to wipe away his tears, he bent his head and ran the towel over his eyes again and again throughout the discourse, inducing profuse tears. But one of the listeners sitting near him saw through the hypocritical abbot's se-

cret. At the end of the discourse when all the devotees had left, he went up to Gadadhara and told him of his discovery.

Ordinary people find fault where there is none; it is hard for them to be otherwise. But the truly holy ones are above all worldliness and look at the world with different eyes. No sooner did the devotee end his story than Gadadhara rose from his seat and hurried to the abbot. Falling at his feet, he exclaimed, 'How blessed you are! I heard you were punishing your eyes with powdered pepper because they didn't shed tears of love for God. Until now I had only heard that the body that doesn't serve the Lord, the mind that doesn't meditate on Him, the heart that doesn't feel God's presence ought to be punished. Indeed, I should consider myself fortunate, because today I have met someone whose actions tally with his ideal.' Saying this Gadadhara embraced the abbot. Their eyes were in tears and the hair on their bodies stood on end. The abbot's whole being was charged with divine fervour. As a result of the saint's touch, hypocrisy left the abbot forever and he became a sincere devotee. \*

## Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God

Gadadhara Bhatta was highly respected for his impeccable character. Yet he looked upon himself as only a humble servant of God. He spent most of his time in the temple, absorbed in the service of the Lord from early morning till late in the evening. He was reluctant to take anybody's help and liked to do everything connected with the worship service himself.

One day, just after the morning worship, Gadadhara was arranging the day's first main offering before the deity, when a temple official came in to inform him of the arrival of a

certain rich devotee. 'He says he has brought presents for you, sir, so I have come to relieve you,' he said. 'I can arrange the offering. Please wash your hands. He is waiting outside to meet you.' Gadadhara looked at the official with eyes full of pity. 'How do you mean, wash your hands? My first duty is to serve the Lord of the Universe. There can't be anything more important to a spiritual aspirant. If the devotee has come to see me, let him wait. He will understand, if he is sharp enough. And who knows? If he is a real devotee, maybe he will follow the example some day.' \*



## Reviews



*For review in PRABUDDHA BHARATA  
publishers need to send two copies of their latest publications.*

**The Buddhist Pilgrimage.** *Duncan Forbes.* Motilal Banarsidass, 41-UA Jawahar Nagar, New Delhi 110 007. 1999. 251 pp. Rs 295.

The most important places of Buddhist pilgrimage in India are inextricably linked with some significant events in the life of Buddha. Hallowed by the sacred memories of the Lord, these places had very early developed as important centres of Buddhist activities. Although most of these sites virtually became extinct within a few centuries of Buddha's death, archaeological findings of their relics since the 19th century have led to a resurgence of such activities in Lumbini, Kapilavastu, Uruvila, Bodhgaya, Sarnath, Rajagriha, Sravasti, Vaisali, Kusinagara and in some other places. Consequently, they have become places of tourist interest especially for Buddhist pilgrims. Duncan Forbes' *The Buddhist Pilgrimage* is a travel account of his visit to these places. It is at once a Buddhist pilgrim's personal journey and an excellent travel book, well informed and well documented. Forbes follows the same route as the itinerant Buddha had taken. He describes in detail stupas, monuments, pillars, museums that have come up, after most of the original monuments were lost owing to famine, pestilence and other causes. Often the author gives the accounts of the Chinese travellers Fa Hien, Hiuen Tsiang and I Chang to compare the reality of the past with the reality of today. He does not try to gloss over the hardships of his tour—the long journeys in slow-moving trains and on dusty roads, the jostling crowds in railway coaches and station platforms, the pestering beggars and the travel agents.

The book is basically a travel-guide targeted at the Western audience desirous of visiting these places. Recounting his visit to Sravasti, Forbes writes, 'There is no guidebook to Sravasti that I know of', thus making his intention clear. So he gives the rates of railway fares and hotel charges in pounds and dollars for their benefit.

The story of the miraculous birth of Siddhartha Gautama, Mother Maya having dreamt of a mystic white elephant, is compared with the story of Virgin Mary and Jesus. Old saint Asita who could read the future Buddha in the child Siddhartha is similarly linked to St Simeon who rejoiced at the sight of the infant Jesus. Some key but elementary terms in Buddhism—the sutras, Tripitaka, Mahayana, Hinayana—are explained with an eye to Western readers.

Aware of the dryness that may creep into his long descriptions, Forbes intersperses his accounts with interesting stories from the *Jatakas* and anecdotes, some of them humorous, from his own travel experiences. Each chapter invariably opens with a historical account of a particular phase in Buddha's life, followed by the author's account of what he saw in those sites which were witnesses to these phases. The personal journey crisscrosses with similar journeys made by other travellers whom he met during this travel—Gregor, Mark Klugman, Andrew Belcher, Marco, Luigi, Mrs Akai and a few others—men and women who have found peace and solace in Buddha and hence came to India to make their own spiritual journeys. The author's own photographs and site-maps enrich the book.

Forbes is harshly critical of the Muslim desecration of Buddhist monuments and literature in the medieval period, and the Chinese aggression in Buddhist Tibet in more recent times. He warmly appreciates the patronage given by the Indian government to the Tibetan refugees.

The book is not without its share of misinformation. Chanakya is referred to as a great king. India is said to have no industrial tribunals, where mail trains run faster than express trains! Such remarks betray a typical condescending Western attitude towards India. To give his book an Indian flavour he uses such terms as *rokiye* ('stop'), or *chalo* ('move') but misspells *badmash* ('rogue') as *bad-marsh*.

All in all, the book is a spiritual journey ending in a 'note of hope in the humble revival of the religion in the land where it was born'.

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**A Yankee and the Swamis.** John Yale. Sri Ramakrishna Math, 16 Ramakrishna Math Road, Mylapore, Chennai 600 004. 2001. 313 pp. Rs 50.

'Everyone will get the god he yearns for; but only he will attain Me who yearns for Me,' Sri Krishna tells Arjuna in the *Bhagavadgita*. It was perhaps thus that Elihu Yale became the Governor of Madras in the 17th century and amassed a fortune. Some 250 years later, separated by ten generations, his descendant John Yale came to India to explore the roots of religion.

It was the *Bhagavadgita* that, in the mid-1940s, came like a fresh breeze into the life of John Yale, an American Protestant, and like a whirlwind carried him and put him in an unfamiliar milieu. He joined the Vedanta Society in Hollywood as a novice under Swami Prabhavananda of the Ramakrishna Order. However, before renouncing everything and becoming a monk, John felt compelled to visit India and check out firsthand the country and its religious promise.

The book is a record of John's discoveries and impressions during his journey through India and its Ramakrishna centres. The easy style of narration, laced with a fine sense of humour, makes the (illustrated) book a delightful and fulfilling experience.

John Yale later became Swami Vidyatmananda and lived in the monastery at Gretz, France, till his final call came a year ago. Even as a mellowed monk, his sense of humour did not fade. Going out to give a sermon one day, he made a face and remarked to his companion: 'Imagine! At the age of 18, I'd vowed never to attend a sermon again in my life!'

Originally published by George Allen & Unwin, London, the book was out of print for many years. The present edition is hardbound and owes its existence to the Ramakrishna Math, Chennai, and to Eleanor and Archibald Stark, admirers of

Swami Vidyatmananda, who have subsidized the costs. One only hopes there will be enough copies to go around.

**Globalization: A Vedanta Kesari Presentation.** Sri Ramakrishna Math, Chennai. 2000. 314 pp. Rs 65.

The book under review contains articles published in the December 1999 bumper issue of *Vedanta Kesari*, a monthly journal of the Ramakrishna Order, published from Sri Ramakrishna Math, Chennai. This issue had spotlighted 'Globalization', which forms the title of the book too.

The book has articles from outstanding and accomplished personalities like Swami Ranganathanandaji, Swami Gautamanandaji, C Subramaniam, Dr Karan Singh, Sister Dayamata, K Dhemmananda, Valson Thampu, Vamadeva Shastri, Asghar Ali Engineer, Acharya Mahaprajna, P Parameswaran, C T Kurien and Mel Gurtov.

The articles are very interesting and may be grouped to throw light on aspects like 'Globalization and World Religions', 'Globalization and the Ramakrishna Movement', 'Global Values' and the 'Impact of Globalization on Various Spheres of Life', like national security, business, politics, human welfare, social and household life, media, and the functioning of voluntary organizations.

The articles do justice to their respective themes by analysing the advantages and disadvantages of globalization, the latest catchword, and its interfaces with various facets of life. What emerges clearly from the pages of this book is this: despite the deep concern of intellectuals and thinkers on the impact of globalization and also notwithstanding the reservations against it, globalization cannot be wished away. The task at hand is not to decry it, but to be prepared and equipped to face the challenges posed by it. This is going to take nothing short of a total social revolution, in which the key factor would be the ethical and spiritual regeneration of society. We have to look to our religions and their perennial philosophy to effect this.

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## ❧ Reports ❧

**Visited.** Haryana Governor Sri Babu Paramanand; Ramakrishna Mission, Shillong, on 1 April. He was accompanied by Meghalaya Governor Mr M M Jacob. On 27 April the centre organized the concluding phase of the centenary celebration of Swami Vivekananda's visit to Shillong. Mr Jacob and several other distinguished persons addressed the public meeting. Mr Jacob also declared open the newly built auditorium at the Vivekananda Cultural Centre (Quinton Hall) of the Mission on the same day. On 26 May, Srimat Swami Gahananandaji Maharaj, Vice-President, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, inaugurated the newly reorganized and computerized library at the Vivekananda Cultural Centre.

**Conducted.** A month-long summer camp for children in the age group of 10-15 years, by Ramakrishna Math, Hyderabad, from 28 April to 26 May. About 900 children took part in the camp. The daily programme included yogasanas, meditation, bhajans, Vedic chanting and moral classes.

**Organized.** The second phase of its platinum jubilee celebrations, by Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Ranchi, from 29 April to 16 May. Sri Baidyanath Ram, Jharkhand Minister of State for Youth Programmes and Sports, declared open a week-long youth convention on 29 April. Srimat Swami Atmasthanandaji Maharaj, Vice-President, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, inaugurated the newly built monks' quarters at the Ashrama on 8 May and spoke at the public meetings on 14, 15 and 16 May.

**Affiliated.** Balaram Mandir Trust with Ramakrishna Math, in May. Balaram Mandir has now been constituted as a branch of the

Ramakrishna Math, Belur, and will be called *Ramakrishna Math (Balaram Mandir), Kolkata*. The address of the centre: 7 Girish Avenue, Kolkata 700 003. (Phone: 033-5545006)

**Affiliated.** Brahmananda Memorial Trust with Ramakrishna Math, in May. Sri Ramakrishna Brahmananda Ashrama has now been constituted as a branch centre of the Ramakrishna Math, Belur, and will be called *Ramakrishna Math, Sikra Kulingram*. The address of the centre: Dt North 24 Parganas, West Bengal 743 428. (Phone: 03217-49980)

**Visited.** Swami Smarananandaji, General Secretary, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission; Durban in South Africa, and Sao Paulo, Curitiba and Belo Horizonte in Brazil, in May, where he addressed well-attended congregations. At Durban he inaugurated the 60th anniversary celebrations of the Ramakrishna Centre of South Africa (an unaffiliated centre) and addressed a gathering of about 1500 people, including some very distinguished persons of that country.

**Organized.** The second phase of its platinum jubilee celebrations, by Ramakrishna Ashrama, Rajkot, from 1 to 5 May. Sri Sureshbhai Mehta, Gujarat Minister for Industries, and several other distinguished persons took part in the 5-day function.

**Laid.** Foundation-stone for the proposed extension building of Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Kolkata, by Srimat Swami Ranganathanandaji Maharaj, President, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, on 15 May (Akshaya Tritiya Day). At the meeting organized in connection with this function, Most Revered President Maharaj gave a short benedictory address. Swami

Gahananandaji Maharaj presided over the meeting in which West Bengal Chief Minister Sri Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee and West Bengal Minister for Higher Education Sri Satyasadhan Chakraborty also spoke. On 16 May, Most Revered President Maharaj inaugurated the renovated public shrine of the Institute.

**Inaugurated.** The newly built hostel building at Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Cherapunji, by Meghalaya Chief Minister Dr F A Khonglam, on 25 May. The Chief Minister also presided over a public meeting organized on this occasion. Swami Gahananandaji Maharaj gave a benedictory address.

**Secured.** 1st and 5th ranks in the West Bengal Secondary Examination 2002, by two students of the secondary school run by Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Malda. A student of the school run by Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Baranagore, came 9th.

**Launched.** Website of Ramakrishna Math,

Vyttila, in May. Its address: [www.ramakrishnamathkochi.org](http://www.ramakrishnamathkochi.org).

**Launched.** Website of Vedanta Society, Providence. Its address: [www.vedantaprov.org](http://www.vedantaprov.org).

**Launched.** Website of Vedanta Society of St Louis. Its address: [www.vedantastl.org](http://www.vedantastl.org).

**Handed over.** Four new school buildings built by the Ramakrishna Mission headquarters in collaboration with Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda Smriti Mandir, Porbandar, in Kadegji, Kunvadar, Amar and Kinderkheda of Porbandar district, Gujarat, to concerned authorities, in May.

**Handed over.** 282 houses out of the 332 taken up for construction by Ramakrishna Mission in collaboration with its branch centres in Gujarat, to concerned authorities. Of the 79 school buildings, 48 have been handed over, 5 have been completed and the rest are in various stages of construction.

## Assumptions

A couple of hunters chartered a plane to fly them into forest territory. Two weeks later the pilot came to take them back. He took a look at the animals they had shot and said, 'this plane won't take more than one wild buffalo. You'll have to leave the other behind.'

'But last year the pilot let us take two in a plane this size,' the hunters protested.

The pilot was doubtful, but finally he said, 'Well, if you did it last year I guess we can do it again.'

So the plane took off with the three men and two buffaloes. But it couldn't gain height and crashed into a neighbouring hill. The men climbed out and looked around. One hunter said to the other, 'Where do you think we are?' The other inspected the surroundings and said, 'I think we're about two miles to the left of where we crashed last year.'